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Confronting Change

An exploration of how teachers experience an externally mandated reform

Shelagh Margaret Potter

Abstract

The purpose of this research has been to develop an understanding of teachers' responses to a dramatic change in their working lives. While there is a significant body of research on the emotional impact of change in organisational life and a growing number of incidental findings related to large scale educational reform few studies have been specifically designed to investigate the emotional lives of teachers during a time of significant change. This narrative inquiry explores how twelve teachers perceived and interpreted their experience of an externally mandated reform namely, the closure of their schools to create an all age Academy. The central objectives have been to gain an insight into how they experienced this reform and to understand their perceptions of the outcomes.

Narrative inquiry was explicitly chosen to explore their individual responses to provide a counter discourse to the performative and rationalist culture within which these teachers worked and which prompted this specific reform. The twelve stories in this research corroborate many of the findings of other researchers and reflect an emotional diversity in their responses. The stories show that teachers who successfully managed their experience of change developed a level of emotional detachment from the wider context in which they were working and that this was either helped or hindered by a range of internal variables.

Confronting Change

An exploration of how teachers experience an externally mandated reform

Shelagh Margaret Potter

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

School of Education
Durham University
2013

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Preface

While this thesis is rooted in the establishment of one particular Academy and the stories of twelve teachers who worked there I must first address my own story as this has had a direct impact on my position as a researcher in this context and therefore the creation of this narrative.

First and foremost, and greatly to my surprise even now, are the ten years I spent as a secondary head. Someone who did not conform to the image of a manager and certainly not the standard image of a school leader I nevertheless took significant strides at various points in my professional career which resulted first in deputy headship and subsequently headship. Each time I sought promotion I did so because I had mastered the demands of my current role and was irritated by others in more senior posts who had not. Thus I arrived at headship. Stricken by panic attacks before I started, I came to relish the challenges of the role enjoying most of all the interaction with both pupils and staff. I took particular pleasure in encouraging them to see what they were capable of and challenging their preconceptions about themselves and those they worked with. I learnt to exercise (and on reflection thoroughly enjoyed) authority and I was fortunate enough to be a head at a time when I was still able to retain significant autonomy before the regulatory frameworks of central control had achieved the stranglehold they have now. As a former head (and current interim head) I am constantly aware of the needs of the whole organisation and the primary purpose of that organisation, the progress of the learners within it.

After nine years of headship the constraints of increasing Local Authority control led me to seek pastures new and I began to look around for new challenges and opportunities. Attracted to the potential of leading one of the first Academies in the country I applied for the role of principal of an Academy and, again to my surprise, not only was I shortlisted but encouraged to attend the interview after deciding to withdraw. Following this experience I was buoyed up with an inflated sense of confidence and successfully applied for a bigger secondary school in a highly disadvantaged area which was undergoing a period of significant

change. Foolishly, rather naively, and certainly with some arrogance, I identified the pitfalls involved in this change process but considered myself equal to them. In the end this proved not to be the case and, under a cloud, I left.

Whatever the rights and wrongs, this experience had a significant impact on me both personally and professionally and inevitably my story took a different turn. After a period of intense reflection I set up my own company and became a consultant. My first assignment as a consultant was in an Academy working for the Department for Children's Services and Families. No longer a head with strategic authority and influence I was not a subordinate either. Equal but different! I had to learn a whole new set of skills and ways of working not only in my dealings with the principal and the project management team but also in my relations with someone else's staff. It was both very humbling and seriously challenging and forced me to reappraise and redefine my professional identity.

Re-inventing who and what I was represented a turning point in my professional life. Since that time I have not looked back. I actively seek challenges which stretch my abilities and sometimes my patience. I embrace change in every aspect of my working life seeking new contexts, different expectations and challenging things to do. Change has become fundamental to my way of life. I thrive on it, seek it, and I am constantly learning by immersing myself in new situations. I do not feel that I have anything to prove. Rather my major change disaster has proved to be liberating, releasing me to see and do new things and open myself to change and what it offers. This research has been a key part of this. It was collaboration with the principal on my first project as a consultant which awoke in me the desire to determine whether I could seriously grapple with academic study. Working with two people who liked to shroud academia in mystery reinforced my determination to follow a new and personally challenging direction. I believed, and still believe, that it is not only unnecessary to blind the uninitiated with what is effectively academic mumbo jumbo, it is also counter-productive. I saw (and see) no need for it particularly if practitioners (in this case teachers) are to derive any personal meaning from research. I have attempted throughout this thesis to ensure that what I write is accessible and relevant to as wide an audience as possible in the belief that academic research must be of use to those in the field. This position has also influenced the nature of my research design.

Why is my story so important within this research? In part I have identified that above. Learning and stretching my abilities in all that I do reflects my belief that this is what we ask, or rather should be asking, of all learners. This is as true of pupils as they grapple with the demands of exam courses or basic Maths as it is for teachers who are facing significant change. While my confidence has returned and in many ways has been strengthened by my experience it has also developed in me deeper self reflection and awareness of the feelings of others. I choose to trust as readily as I did before but that trust is always tempered by my increased awareness of the complexity of other people's motivations and what they are prepared to do in order to preserve their own sense of self worth. I seek to understand what lies beneath the masks that people present to each other rather than accept what they present at face value. This high degree of reflexivity has been a critical research tool within this study.

The emotional journey that I have undertaken has shaped my position on change and my role as a researcher. My role within this particular Academy has also had a bearing on the ways in which I have interpreted the stories I have been told.

Setting up an Academy in this case meant working intensively with the sponsor to help him articulate his vision and how he wanted it to be realised. It also involved meeting the expectations of the department (DCSF) and ensuring that everything was in place to enable the Academy to open. Much of the work in the early stages took place with little real contact with the predecessor schools. Working with the sponsor and the Local Authority I drafted a curriculum model for an all age Academy and began to develop the associated staffing structures and address the complexities of implementing the sponsor's vision. While there was initially some opposition to the establishment of an all age Academy from the Headteachers and governing bodies it soon became possible to engage with the predecessor schools and share the sponsor's plans for the future.

From this point on a number of things needed to be put in place some of which are of direct relevance to the stories told by the teachers in this research. First, was the pressing need to conduct the TUPE process as

swiftly and effectively as possible so that staff knew as soon as possible where they were to be deployed in September when the Academy opened as one organisation. This was not a straightforward process. The deployment of staff was a much lengthier process than anticipated. The sponsor went through a rigorous programme of internal recruitment for all senior posts which meant that classroom teachers did not find out where they were to be deployed until the summer term. Non teaching staff had been TUPE transferred en masse in March but again deployment took, in some cases, well into the summer holidays. This was an anxious time for many staff and a number, including some senior leaders, chose to seek employment elsewhere.

Second, in the absence of a successful appointment to the role of Principal Designate I assumed these duties until one was appointed. In effect this meant that I represented the public face of the Academy to staff and the local community.

Third, with the opening of the Academy my role would normally be complete. The project management team withdrew but the Principal asked me to stay on to ensure a smooth transition in the opening months of the Academy. During this period staff were well aware that I was continuing to act as advisor up to and including the point at which I conducted the research interviews.

All of this is of direct relevance to the purpose and context of this research as will become clear. It is, however, worth noting before I continue that while I actively embrace change within my professional life I am also very familiar with the impact of imposed and unanticipated change. Managing the emotions involved in the latter has inevitably influenced my perspective on the stories told by teachers as they recount their own experiences.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the research

1.1 Personal motivation for this study

As a headteacher, particularly in an area of relative deprivation, it becomes progressively more challenging to see things from the perspective of those that you lead and manage. This is exacerbated by the ever increasing demands of public accountability and central regulation. Since becoming a consultant and interim manager and seeing things from a new perspective it has become increasingly clear to me that we ignore at our peril the feelings and stories of those charged with the day to day interaction with learners as it is they who make the most profound difference to the lives of young people. Over the past twenty five years teachers have been bombarded by change and significant pressure to achieve targets within an increasingly performance based culture. This pressure is felt perhaps most keenly in those contexts where teaching is already a stressful and highly emotional experience and where young people have the greatest need for skilful and hard working teachers. Unfortunately this also means that they are more likely to be the focus of significant and often intrusive intervention strategies.

While the emotional nature of teachers' work and the role it plays in relation to learning has been largely ignored within education policy (O'Connor, 2008) there is a now growing body of research on the emotional nature of teaching (e.g. A. Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996) as well as the impact of change on teachers (e.g. Kelchtermans, 2005; Schmidt & Datnow, 2005; van Veen, Slegers, & van de Ven, 2005). My observation as a consultant has been that the priority of change leaders and managers is, by and large, to ensure the successful completion of a change process rather than necessarily to understand its impact on teachers and their various emotional responses. The preponderance of management texts on the subject reinforces the view that a leader's job is to secure the desired change rather than understand the impact on their employees. Nowhere is this more evident than in the context of a school which is deemed to be failing and as a result is subject to

substantial structural change (e.g. becoming an Academy). And yet those same teachers continue to work with young people during and after the implementation of such a major change. They are expected to improve standards as well as meet additional demands and are thus faced with a dual challenge: working in an emotionally taxing environment and contending with the demands of new leadership and management and/or new structures and processes. This study seeks to understand how teachers in one such context experienced a major change of this nature through an exploration of their individual stories.

1.2 Purpose and significance of this study

Teachers are at the heart of learning in schools. Good teachers inspire through passion for their subject and interaction with, and commitment to, their learners (Barnett & Hodgson, 2001; Bruce in (eds) Abbott and Moylett, 1999). A really good teacher is remembered for life. Poor teachers, on the other hand, hold learners back. They can inspire fear or be the subject of ridicule (Astor, Benbenishty, Anat & Vinokour, 2002). At worst they impact negatively on attitudes to learning which impedes achievement and progress in the short and sometimes, long term (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Davis, 2003; A. Hargreaves, 2000). Teaching is an emotional experience whether positive or negative for both the teacher (A. Hargreaves, 2005) and the taught (Pekrun, 1992; Sansone and Thoman, 2005). Teachers make a difference to the lives of many. Each of us recognises the important role that individual teachers have played in our lives and in our successes and failures.

Nationally and internationally recognition of the crucial role played by teachers and schools and their impact on young people and our future success as nations has resulted in a massive school improvement agenda (e.g. Hopkins, 2001) and a drive to improve standards in the profession (Mahoney & Hextall, 2000). In England the introduction of a rigorous inspection framework, school self evaluation, the national curriculum and the publication of league tables have all been key components of policies designed to deliver what has become a national imperative. Over the last twenty five years the range of externally imposed measures has been extensive and yet there remains a significant number of schools in which it is claimed teaching is unsatisfactory

and consequently schools which are failing to provide the required standard of education for their learners. The government's solution to this apparently intransigent problem has been to impose layers of structural change. Over a period of time this has included the introduction of City Technology Colleges, Fresh Start Schools and more recently Academies (formerly City Academies, now sponsored Academies) and Free Schools. New leadership, new staffing structures and additional investment have sought to alter the nature of individual schools and hence impact on the quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement. The reasons why some schools find it difficult to achieve the step change required even with the additional resources and investment that comes as a result of such programmes are many and varied. Perceived by some as excuses and by others as self evident explanatory factors structural change in some contexts still fails to achieve the desired impact in some contexts.

Whatever the specific nature of structural changes which are imposed the teaching contingent in such contexts remains largely unchanged. Some teachers may leave for promotion or retirement, some as a result of increased stress resulting from intense change (Smylie in (eds) Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999; Trotman & Woods, 2000). Still others may be forced or encouraged to leave as a direct result of the TUPE transfer process or more stringent management processes within the new context. However, the majority of teachers in a school which changes status either endures or embraces the change process and continues to teach the same students from the same or similar environments as before. Leadership, management and structures may change but those who provide the daily interaction with students and who are directly charged with their learning and achievement transfer from one situation to another, are subject to higher or different expectations and required to make significant improvements, often, within a rapid timescale.

This study focuses on the stories of twelve such teachers whose schools were closed and re-opened as an all age Academy.

1.3 Research purpose and research objectives

The purpose of this research has been to understand how individual teachers perceive and interpret a significant educational reform. While this purpose has been clear since the outset, formulating the specific nature of the research objectives has not been straightforward. I did not want to limit my exploration of what I anticipated to be rich data resulting from the individual teachers' stories by creating research questions which were too specific or too narrow. At the same time I was conscious that the richness of data would present a particular challenge during the analytical and writing phases. Like de Weerd-Nederhof (2001), I reflected on and revisited my research questions several times during the course of this research. However the two key strands of thinking which initially prompted the study kept re-emerging and have been formulated into the following objectives:

1. What insight do teachers' stories give us into how individual teachers experience a centrally imposed reform?
2. What are their perceptions of the outcomes of that reform?

Framing these as research objectives rather than specific research questions has enabled me to maintain a broad perspective and allow the teachers' stories themselves to provide the framework for the outcomes. This also informed the research design and the choice of methodology which explicitly invited the twelve participants to set the tone and direction of the story they wanted to tell. This resulted, as anticipated, in a rich and complex data set which has required careful analysis.

It has become conventional wisdom in education policy and practice that 'change' will secure higher standards. This change takes many forms: a change of status, sponsorship, new leadership and management, new initiatives, or in the case of the Academy in this study, all of the above. Given the imperative to drive up standards especially in areas of deprivation where standards have traditionally been lower I was keen to understand whether the practical experience of teachers in such a situation favoured this conventional

wisdom, or not, and in what ways. In other words, was it the teachers' perception that the change to Academy status achieved any or all of the stated aims?

1.4 Context of this research

In line with the ethical considerations discussed in Chapter 3 (3.11) issues of confidentiality have been of particular importance throughout this research. While this has inevitably curtailed the level of detail that I can provide, the paragraphs below still offer a detailed contextual statement which enables the reader to understand the nature of this reform context. They also provide sufficient information to facilitate the process of 'transferability' to other contexts.

This research context provided a unique opportunity to gain insight into the views of both primary and secondary teachers as they faced the imposition of an external reform namely, the creation of an all age sponsored Academy. Thus, they faced the same reform but from two distinct perspectives. It also posed specific challenges as I had previously been involved in both setting up the Academy and in supporting the Principal in the first 12 months after it opened.

Until recently all sponsored Academies, even those which were all age in nature, resulted from significant concerns about standards in the predecessor secondary school. This Academy was no different. Located in an area of significant deprivation following the collapse of the local industry more than 25 years previously, the prevailing culture within the community was one of low aspirations and low outward mobility. Many parents had themselves attended the secondary school which suffered from a poor reputation in the local community. Aspirational parents reputedly sought admission for their children to other local schools in preference to the predecessor secondary school. The poor reputation centred on behaviour, attendance and standards. This view of the secondary school was shared by some teachers in the primary phase and was exemplified by poor outcomes at Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5, OFSTED, the Local Authority and the Department for Education and Skills

through the decision to seek Academy status. The school demonstrated the classic symptoms associated with schools in similar circumstances: concerns with leadership and management, poor standards of teaching, lack of student engagement and staff dissatisfaction. The staff group in many ways reflected similar characteristics to the local community and suffered from low turn-over and low inward mobility.

Primary teachers were operating within the same community and faced similar issues relating to low aspirations and high levels of deprivation. In contrast, however, provision appeared, on the surface at least, to be satisfactory if not good. Primary education enjoyed a good reputation amongst parents and had received validation from OFSTED. The creation of an all age Academy therefore brought together two contrasting cultures and communities.

An additional and significant contextual feature has been my previous and, at the time of the interviews, my current role in the Academy. Participants were aware of my role in working with the sponsors to set up the Academy. They also knew that I was supporting the Principal in securing necessary changes in the first twelve months after the Academy opened although my work as a consultant had no direct impact on any of the participants. As I explain later this set of circumstances afforded me a unique insight into the circumstances which the teachers describe in their stories.

1.5 Structure of thesis

The following paragraphs describe the framework for this thesis and the journey that I have taken as a researcher along with the teachers who agreed to take part.

1.5.1 Literature review

Chapter 2 is divided into two main contrasting sections. The first seeks to understand the context and the pressures of the educational environment in which teachers have been working at a national level over the

past twenty five years. The second section of the Chapter seeks to understand the impact of those same pressures at a specific level (i.e. the individual teacher). While this study focuses on individuals and their stories these stories cannot be told or understood in isolation from the environment in which they unfold.

The first section of the literature review seeks to locate the experiences of these twelve teachers within a wider educational, political and historical context. The section reflects firstly on the issues facing schools in challenging circumstances and the research into the means of addressing the thorny problem of school improvement in these contexts (2.2). It then reflects specifically on the wider educational climate and its antecedents, a climate increasingly characterised by the marketisation of schools and the constructs of performativity and new managerialism (2.3).

The second section of the literature review provides a counter discourse to the rationalist assumptions which underpin the wider political and educational landscape (2.4). This section highlights research on teachers' emotions and how they inform their professional identity and their reaction to change. It acknowledges that teachers have to constantly negotiate the tension between these two discourses in their daily lives. Attention is explicitly drawn through the structure of the literature review to the juxtaposition of the technicist approach to education and change and the emotional aspects of a teacher's life and work. In structuring the literature review in this way I have constantly been reminded of an image from French literature, that of 'le mecanique plaque sur le vivant' (Bergson, 1924). While Bergson was describing an entirely different phenomenon he was also trying to understand what happens when something artificial constrains something that is alive. This section concludes by placing the discussion on emotion and change in the education sector within the wider context of emotion and change in other organisations (2.5).

1.5.2 Chapter 3 – Research design

Chapter 3 outlines the path that was taken to arrive at my research design, how the data was gathered and how it was analysed. The chapter describes the underlying epistemology, the adoption of an interpretive stance and how and why I became a 'bricoleuse' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I discuss the concept of narrative authority and narrative inquiry and how the participant sample was chosen. This discussion is followed by a consideration of my chosen research strategy (3.5) and how I defined (3.6) and entered the field (3.7). This section explains how the participants were chosen and the approach taken to the individual interviews. In the following section (3.8) I outline my reasons for applying two distinct methods of data analysis, one which was designed to focus on the individual voices of the participants; the other to achieve the rigour required to facilitate cross case analysis and generate themes, concepts or patterns across all of the stories told. The ensuing sections discuss the critical role of reflexivity in the context of this research (3.9) and the steps which were taken to maximise its trustworthiness (3.10). I then consider the ethical issues involved in the research (3.11). The chapter concludes by outlining the specific stages and steps undertaken within the data analysis (3.12).

1.5.3 Chapter 4 – Case records

Chapter 4 provides the reader with an opportunity to engage with each of the participants and the story that they tell. The case records ensure that the particularity of each individual voice continues to be heard in the final narrative even as I seek to identify and discriminate between common and differing themes arising from the cross case analysis. The chapter represents the first stage of my data analysis and is included to further support the plausibility of my findings.

1.5.4 Chapter 5 – Confronting change

This chapter presents the findings of the cross case analysis. It identifies a number of key change variables (external and internal) which are experienced by participants as they move through the change journey. Three stages of this change journey are identified: living with uncertainty, understanding and acceptance of change,

and facing new realities. External and internal change variables are discussed in relation to the stages of this journey and the impact that they have on individual teachers.

1.5.5 Chapter 6 – Coming to terms with change

The final chapter enters into an in-depth discussion of the findings, analysing them in relation to my two research objectives and the literature explored in Chapter 2. The chapter concludes by outlining the limitations of this research, by identifying a series of practical lessons learned and by considering the contribution that this research makes to knowledge in the field.

Chapter 2: The educational and political landscape

2.1 Introduction

Education has been high on the political agenda in schools for over twenty five years and has resulted in a culture which is dominated by regulation and accountability. This has inevitably impacted on the nature of teaching over that same period of time and on the nature of teachers' work. This chapter reviews the extensive body of literature on this subject and seeks to provide an understanding of the national context with its pressures and demands and sets this alongside the impact that this has had on teachers. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the issues faced by teachers in the UK to enable the reader to contextualise the findings of this research when a group of teachers are then faced with a major reform event.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section focuses on the wider educational, political and historical context. The second provides a counter discourse to the rationalist assumptions which underpin the wider political and educational landscape. This section highlights research on teachers' emotions and how they inform their professional identity and their reaction to change. This chapter concludes with a brief consideration of literature on emotion and change within other organisations.

2.2 Working in challenging contexts

2.2.1 Disadvantage and achievement

As Tomlinson (2001) points out, more people have been educated to higher levels since 1942 than ever before and yet education is constantly portrayed as failing or being in crisis. Opportunities abound for politicians, the media or 'the man in the street' to expound their point of view. The publication of comparative data resulting from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development 2000, 2003, 2006 & 2009) supports the view that the UK is falling behind other nations while other publications such as OFSTED reports provide further evidence that individual schools are failing to provide an adequate education for their students. In the introduction to the 2010 annual OFSTED report, Gilbert, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (2010, p8) states categorically that '*the slow progress of many satisfactory schools remains a concern*' and that '*too much teaching in schools is still not good enough*'. Such statements fuel the debate with elitists arguing for selection and for better and superior resourced types of education (i.e. academic), those committed to social justice arguing for meritocracy based on equality of opportunity while parents simply want the best for their child.

Inevitably schools in challenging circumstances are at the forefront of this debate particularly given the annual publication of league tables which continue to give a high profile to raw scores and which highlight the disparity in outcomes between these schools and others. While there have been notable exceptions (e.g. Hamlyn, 1996; 2001; West, Ainscow & Stanford, 2005) it is recognised, if not accepted with equanimity, that generating and sustaining improvement in these contexts proves to be particularly difficult (e.g. Cassen, 2007; Demie, Butler & Taplin, 2010; Mortimore & Blackstone, 1982; Smith & Tomlinson, 1989). Gorard (2005) reminds us that while policy makers and others who are concerned with equity in education continue to seek the holy grail that will break the strong statistical link between socio-economic disadvantage and low levels of educational attainment that this grail continues to remain elusive. This position would appear to be supported by Hopkins and Levin (2000) who draw attention to what they describe as an '*irony of quite breathtaking proportions*' namely '*that the dramatic increase of educational reform efforts in most western countries over the past decade is having insufficient impact on levels of student achievement*'(p19).

It is very easy, at first glance, to empathise with this statement and yet closer examination as suggested by the likes of Thrupp (1999) suggests that this assertion is in many ways disingenuous as it takes no account of the wider social context in which certain schools have to operate and no account of the extreme challenges faced by

some teachers. Thrupp argues that what he calls 'school mix' has a significant impact not just on student outcomes but also on school processes. He raises three key issues suggesting firstly that 'school effect' may not actually reflect a school's effectiveness at all but continue to be indirectly related to the school mix; secondly, that it will be hard to replicate school effectiveness factors because while they may be school based they may not be caused by the school; and most relevantly for this discussion, that while school effectiveness literature views ethos and culture as organisational features of the schools created and maintained by the staff that a school's culture is in fact rooted in the nature of the student body and their context and therefore that even the development of a highly positive staff culture may sometimes have limited impact.

Lupton (2004) describes the additional commitment and energy required from staff working in contexts which are disadvantaged particularly the impact of the overall emotional climate in such schools which often includes a higher proportion of disturbed behaviour. She indicates what any practitioner working in such circumstances knows all too well, that these are draining atmospheres in which to work and *'more demanding on a personal level than simply delivering the subject'* (p10). More time is spent on a higher incidence of trivial matters resulting in less time available for everyday tasks such as marking which, as a result, encroaches on the personal time of staff. This inevitably leads to high levels of unpredictability and greater pressure on individual staff which in turn impacts on culture and the capacity for change.

2.2.2 School effectiveness and school improvement

There is now an extensive body of literature on school effectiveness resulting from international research (e.g. Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000; Reynolds, Creemers, Stringfield, Teddlie & Schaffer; 2002; Townsend, 2007) to which this review does not attempt to do full justice. This research, which according to Hopkins (2001: p42) *'has demonstrated unequivocally that given the right conditions all students can learn'*, has had a significant impact on policy making in England particularly in the field of school leadership. Murphy (cited in Townsend, 2007) concurs with this assessment but also suggests that another product of research in this field stems from the

rejection of the historical perspective that good schools and bad schools could be identified by the socio-economic status of the areas in which they were located (p 3). This is one of the key legacies of the school effectiveness movement. Leadership programmes for headteachers and middle managers over the last ten years have highlighted the key features of successful schools and leaders have been encouraged and 'trained' to develop these in their own schools.

The processes and practice of school improvement have formed the core purpose of a sister body of research led in the UK by amongst others, Hopkins. In contrast to the school effectiveness movement which focuses on the results, the school improvement movement is concerned with process (Spinks cited in Townsend, *ibid*). Hopkins (2001) argues that there are two major components to school improvement; what he calls the 'capacity building dimension' and the 'strategic dimension' where the former relates to the conditions for development in the school and the latter more explicitly to the focus of improvement activity. There is clearly a symbiotic relationship between the conditions for school improvement (e.g. commitment to staff development and collaborative planning; practical efforts to involve staff, students and the community in decision making) and the culture within a school. Recognising that merely describing these conditions is insufficient Hopkins (2001) outlines a series of propositions which he suggests '*hold the key to the establishment of a school culture that can meaningfully empower all teachers within the school community*' (p 104) and help to achieve a 'moving school' (Rosenholtz, 1989). One refers to the need for a clear vision and regards leadership as a function to which many staff contribute while another suggests that schools which value enquiry and reflection find it easier to gain clarity and establish shared meanings around identified priorities. While Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) stress that any school improvement must be context specific, adapting external change for internal purpose and involving all teachers, there is still an underlying supposition within their work and within the wider body of school improvement work that if the right pieces of the jigsaw are put into place then school improvement will result.

A number of criticisms have been levelled at both the school effectiveness and the school improvement movements. Stoll (1998) argues that the school effectiveness movement may have identified the key features of successful schools but it has failed to describe how schools, particularly those that are 'struggling' or 'sinking' might themselves achieve such outcomes (West et al, 2005). As Ouston (2003) puts it – are such features the cause or are they the effect of successful schools? In the same critique of the school effectiveness and school improvement movements Ouston suggests that there is a conceptual hole in guides to school improvement: *'They never seem to offer help in answering three key questions, what will you do to improve? how? and why?'* (p259). This seems to sum up one of the major concerns about both movements succinctly demonstrating that there are no clear cut answers to the issue of moving 'stuck schools' and that it is the prevailing culture within a school and the impact that leaders are able to make on this culture which determines what movement if any will be achieved. Gorard (2009) argues that it is time to reconsider what we mean by school effect and find out what really works to improve our schools rather than indulge in what he calls *'post hoc data dredging'* which he contends is a seriously flawed means of analysing school progress. Research has explored the need to adopt a differentiated approach to schools in such contexts (e.g. Harris and Chapman, 2004; Lupton, 2004) arguing that a de-contextualised approach, particularly one which is founded on the features of effective schools, will do little to support the improvement of schools facing long established patterns of underperformance.

Given the complex nature of culture and change in relatively healthy organisations it is not surprising that increasing concern is being expressed about its role in the context of those that are less healthy and Stoll (2003) among others (Angus, McNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009; Watson, 2001) regards cultural issues as the core problem facing schools which are failing or in challenging circumstances. D. Hargreaves (cited in Gray, 2000) describes a survivalist culture amongst both staff and students in failing schools where the school is close to breakdown. This is characterised by low social cohesion, low social control where individuals feel insecure, alienated, isolated and at risk. In such situations according to Reynolds (cited in Gray, 2000) there may be a fear of outsiders, strong defence mechanisms and a reluctance to risk change. Indeed this analysis led Reynolds to suggest that it may be

more appropriate in certain situations to rebuild ineffective schools, closing and re-open them under new leadership and management resulting in the so-called 'Fresh Start' schools of the late nineties and, more recently Academies.

2.3 Marketisation

The section above outlines the educational imperative which has informed both the Academies programme and the wider reform agenda in which it is located. This section addresses the specific political and historical context in which this imperative has evolved in education, that of the free market.

In answer to the question '*What is a market?*' Levin and Belfield (2003) offer the explanation that '*markets are places (literally or figuratively) where buyers and sellers come together to establish purchase of goods and services at an agreed upon price*' (p189). Tooley (1995) refers to the standard definition of markets as '*mechanisms for the registering of preferences and apportioning of resources in society and the importance of supply and demand*'. Both these definitions along with others are derived from economic theory about classic markets but it is their application to public sector education within the context of a shift towards neo-liberalism which has sparked significant debate and controversy over the last few decades. Indeed Olsen, Codd and O'Neill (2004) have suggested that '*Neo-liberalism 'proper' arises with those theories that advocate an extension of the market rules and principles to public and private sector organizational restructuring*'(p 153).

Lauder (1991) suggests that there are three separate aspects to the introduction of market competition into education. The first is the devolution of financial, policy and staffing decisions to individual schools. This self management of educational institutions is represented in England and Wales by Local Management of Schools where funding is delegated directly to schools and where governing bodies have increased autonomy over local decision-making. The second aspect is the assumption that all schools are able to compete on a level playing field regardless of their intake or location. This argument lays the responsibility for success and achievement

firmly at the door of school leadership and management and on the quality of teaching that they are able to achieve. This aspect has impacted explicitly on the culture of managerialism that has developed such firm roots within the educational landscape. The third aspect is that the exercise of parental choice, which the New Right argue establishes the incentive for schools to improve, is unproblematic; that is, that it will not give rise to outcomes which will themselves impact on the nature of the market and its ability to drive up standards.

There are two prevailing discourses within the literature about the marketisation of education: one which is represented by theorists such as Chubb and Moe (1990); Shleifer (1998) and Tooley (1992; 1993; 1996); the other by Whitty (2002); Ranson (2003) and Ball (1994, 2007, 2008). While some of the references may seem dated the historical perspective on this debate is critical to an understanding of its influence on the educational landscape of the past twenty five years.

Rooting their argument in a climate of increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of schools and educational outcomes, Chubb and Moe (1990) contend that reforms which are focused solely on aspects of a school's organisation and immediate environment are generally likely to fail. They argue that it is the wider environment, what they refer to as the system of institutional control, which determines the ability of public schools to successfully implement reforms that improve quality and outcomes. Through a detailed comparison of data from private and state schools Chubb and Moe identify specific differences between the two sectors which they suggest contribute to greater or lesser degrees of success. These include the constraints imposed upon principals in the public sector with regard to the hiring and firing of staff, the qualities and career progression of the principal him or herself and how he/she is perceived by staff and the ability of schools to formulate policy and determine practice. They conclude that state schools are products of our democratic institutions; that they are subordinates in a hierarchical system of control heavily influenced by diverse constituency groups and that it is therefore unsurprising that they are lacking in autonomy, that their principals have difficulty leading them and that school goals are heterogeneous, unclear and undemanding (ibid, 1987: p 376). They conclude from this that

the nature of the environment in which state education operates should therefore change to more closely, though not exactly, resemble that in which private schools are able to operate: in other words, they should be subject to market modes of control. Chubb and Moe's position is supported by Shleiffer (1998) who argues that a system of public education which does not employ market forces will inevitably be less efficient and produce lower outcomes.

While generally in support of a market based approach to education Tooley (1993; 1996) suggests that the term 'market' in an education context is inappropriate. He refers instead to a 'so-called market' within education. This chimes with LeGrand and Barlett's concept of a quasi-market (1993). Tooley argues that exit and voice are available in markets while only voice is available under democratic control. Indeed power of exit is one of the market's proclaimed advantages (Seldon, 2004). Tooley and others find the arguments for state intervention in, and democratic control of, education unsatisfactory, the arguments against markets inadequate and the arguments of economic theorists such as Hayek (1973, 1992) considerably more cogent.

The other dominant discourse is led by the likes of Whitty (2002), Jonathon (1990), Brown (2003), Ransom (1993) and Ball (1994, 2007, 2008) amongst others who raise concerns about the impact of market reforms both from a theoretical perspective and on the basis of empirical evidence. Their arguments cover in particular the nature of the changes brought about by market reform and how market reforms are likely to or have impacted on aspects of social justice.

Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998) suggest that the opportunities afforded by markets in education are more illusory than real and that the imposition of the key aspects of marketisation has led to an increasingly wide gap between those who manage and those who are managed. In a similar vein Foskett (1998) argues that marketisation leads to cultural changes within schools and that the introduction of markets at least in part was a deliberate attempt to challenge the professionally defined culture within education. It is argued therefore that it

is the marketisation of education which has inexorably led to the new managerialism so evident in schools in England. Jonathon (1990), on the other hand, is concerned not simply with changes in schools but changes to the social structure within which education operates. She argues that we are all faced with a market driven 'prisoner's dilemma' in which we each have the opportunity to make decisions which may be of benefit to us as individuals but that those very decisions together lead to sub-optimal choices for society as a whole. Her position calls into question both the socio-economic viability of educational consumerism as well as its moral integrity.

It is generally recognised by both 'sides' that the marketisation of education does not represent a true market. Chubb and Moe (1992) point out that educational markets must operate within an institutional framework and that it is the government's responsibility to design this framework. In the case of the UK this has involved the establishment of LMS, a National Curriculum, the publication of league tables and a rigorous inspection system each of which is supposed to support parental ability to make a choice. Stringent controls are central to the concept of the education market place where the government sets the rules of the game and everyone else – parents, governors, principals and teachers – must play their part. It is the nature of this game that both Jonathon (1990) and Ransom (1993) take issue with.

Levin and Belfield (2003) contend that all educational arrangements including the education market face a conflicting set of goals and require trade-offs. They suggest that there are four criteria for an effective education system namely: freedom of choice, productive efficiency, equity and social cohesion. While the discourses for and against markets in education have become somewhat ritualised and are long standing there is no doubt that those who express concerns about freedom of choice do so as a direct result of their concern about its impact on equity and social cohesion, a point which Levin and Belfield seem to overlook in their assessment.

2.3.1 Choice and Diversity

Choice and diversity are two of the key tenets of the marketisation of education. In our consumer society we have come to take for granted our individual entitlement to choice and diversity in goods and services without always considering the impact that the exercise of our entitlement may have on the range of choices available to others. Our society has developed a cultural position that increasingly reinforces individual rights often at the expense of the collective good. This informs the basis of Jonathan's (1990) and Cookson's (1996) argument against market forces in education. In his trenchant treatise on school choice in the USA Cookson suggests that much of what is written (and now practised) about educational policy '*has the aura of political innocence that borders on self deception*' (p 107) and knowingly places private interests over the public good with people encouraged to help themselves rather than help the disadvantaged. However, given our consumer society it is hardly surprising that parental choice has become so deeply embedded in our system of education and if choice is of such critical importance it therefore follows, according to market theory, that increasing diversity enables parents to make a genuine choice between schools and that schools will be driven to improve their performance or fall into a '*spiral of decline*' (Gorard, Taylor & Fitz, 2002).

As Blunkett (cited in Glatter, Woods & Bagley, 1997) and others (e.g. Haydn, 2004) have indicated, the concept of diversity is far from new. It has taken many different shapes and forms, perhaps the most tenacious of these being single sex and faith schools along with the tripartite system itself which could also be said to offer diversity albeit in a different form and purportedly to different ends. However, increasing diversity as an explicit policy objective to enable greater choice came into its own with the 1988 Education reform Act which enshrined in legislation a parent's right to exercise a preference for a given school for their child. Under the Conservative government this led to the introduction of the Assisted Places scheme, City Technology Colleges, Grant Maintained Schools and Specialist Schools each of which was explicitly designed to extend the range of diversity within the UK education market (Edwards & Whitty, 1997). This diversity now includes both sponsored and 'converter' Academies and Free Schools.

Supporters of neo-liberal philosophy assert that a range of products i.e. a variety of schools available within the quasi-market will enable parents to choose the one which suits them best and in so doing ensure that 'good' schools flourish and 'poor' schools close, thus maintaining high standards for all. The political right has also insisted that choice, in itself, is a desirable thing, an appealing idea because it *'squares with people's common sense reaction to the notion'* (D. Hargreaves: 1996a). However the precise connection between choice and diversity is not really understood and appears both subtle and ambiguous (Glatter, 2004). On the evidence of research undertaken with small faith groups Walford (1996a) suggests that the demand for greater diversity has not actually come from parents but has been generated by state intervention. Indeed one of the key staging posts in the development of specialisation, the CTCs, was initially met with considerable hostility by parents, local politicians and industrialists (Whitty, 1997). Higham, Sharp & Priestly (2000) concur with the view that diversity in the form of specialisation in England is *'a state driven programme in both its conception and operation'* rather than a result of parental or market demand. Gewirtz, Miller and Halford (cited in Walford 1996a) suggest that parents are not attracted by the diversity but by the option to go to a school that they perceive *'would offer the 'same' education but do it 'better'* (p 145). This interpretation is supported by Glatter (2004) who suggests that parents are looking for schools which will deliver the standard product well. As early as 1998 Woods, Bagley and Glatter highlighted an increasing trend towards traditionalism with an emphasis on academic achievement to the detriment of intrinsic, personal and social value perspectives on learning while Gorard (1998) suggests that decisions about the choice of school are rooted in the past and that what he calls the 'domino effect' can sometimes cover three generations. He suggests that an inevitable consequence of this is a return to conservatism and restorationism in schools increasingly evidenced, for example, in the resurgence of the blazer and tie in secondary and even primary schools. In their review on the literature of choice and diversity Gorard (1999) citing Hesketh and Knight notes that the overall impression is that choice is not leading to diversity among schools and that specialism or reputation for a particular subject is a negligible factor in parents choosing a school. The debate between D. Hargreaves (1996a, 1996b) and Walford (1996a, 1996b) on this issue led to Walford's categorical statement that:

‘there is very little demand for diversity. ‘Choice’ is not naturally paired with diversity but with selection and inequity of provision. While there are some parents who desire schools that serve their own particular religious beliefs, in general, there is very little demand for curriculum specialisms or schools supporting particular philosophies’ (Walford, 1996: p 159)

Theorists such as Walford, Jonathon and Ransom concerned as they are with the impact of market policies on social justice have long maintained that the exercise of choice has the potential to impact negatively on the choices of others and that this would lead to inequity and social segregation. Drawing on data from all the state funded schools in England and Wales over a period of thirteen years Gorard, Taylor and Fitz’ (2002) research confounds this theoretical perspective. They report that there is no increased segregation in schools compared to the era before marketisation, an era which had already been characterized by different types of segregation in England and Wales. The same research also confounds the expectations of market theorists regarding the spiral of decline that faces schools which do not attract parental choice or raise standards. This perspective was found to have no empirical support.

Other empirical studies have demonstrated that there are highly practical implications for parents wanting to exercise choice in rural areas or other areas where there is poor public transport (Gorard et al, 2002). Even in larger urban areas with good transport systems real parental choice is restricted when popular schools are oversubscribed and parents do not meet the required criteria for admission. This can be of particular concern in relation to students with SEN or medical needs where schools act as their own admission authorities (West, Hind & Pennell, 2004; West & Hind, 2006). Research by West et al (ibid) also points to a significant minority of schools who use admission criteria to select some students and exclude others. This is likely to be further exacerbated by the new admissions policy under the coalition government (Department for Education, 2012).

More complex still are the means that individual parents have at their disposal for making choices (Gewirtz *ibid*). How parents make their choices about schools is in part determined by the values that inform their decision-making (Ball, 1993) and, no doubt, by their own experiences. Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz (2003) argue that choice itself has different meanings in different families and that the government's consumerist, market driven concept of choice is more likely to be understood and embraced by the middle class. Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995) identified three broad groups of choosers in this context: privileged/skilled choosers, the semi-skilled choosers and the disconnected. Those with the greatest cultural, social and indeed economic capital inevitably have an unfair advantage over others. At its very simplest this is evident in what has become known as the process of 'selection by mortgage' or the 'postcode lottery' which has been well documented including in television programmes showing how parents use economic capital to buy their way into schools with good reputations.

2.3.2 Performativity and the new managerialism

If the introduction of market policies has resulted in a complex landscape from the perspective of parents and their children it has also resulted in a completely changed environment for those who work in schools, particularly teachers. Gewirtz (2002) suggests that the emergence of what she refers to as '*post welfarism*' has been characterized by formal commitments to market democracy and competitive individualism alongside the belief that welfare bureaucrats and professionals (e.g. teachers) were the source of problems rather than the solution and that this has inevitably led to a new relationship between the state and schools. She further asserts that this new educational landscape has been created through a series of disparate policies which together have resulted in a highly regulated and disciplinary framework including the publication of league tables, the new national curriculum, a stringent inspection regime and performance management. This view is supported by Perryman (2007) and Elliot (2001), amongst others. Paradoxically, however, Gewirtz further suggests that this framework was actually designed in part to '*unleash the productive potential of school managers*' (*ibid*: p6). Whether this was an intentional or an incidental outcome most theorists and researchers support the view that performativity has become the dominant school discourse (e.g. Ball 2001; Perryman, 2007; West, Hind & Pennell,

2005) and that it both relies on, and is reinforced, by new managerialism (Forrester, 2000). The extensive critique on this subject amongst education writers has taken a number of forms but essentially centres on what is characterised as the relentless diminution of the professional autonomy of teachers at the hands of prescriptive and regulatory governments or *'the imposition of an alien architecture of managerialism in place of traditional professional values'* (Storey, 2007, p257) or in Bergson's terms *'le mecanique plaque sur le vivant'* (1924).

The concept of performativity, a term first coined by Lyotard (1984) and used by Ball (2001) to label the raft of measures and the logic which underpins them, reflects a political and commercial preoccupation with efficiency and effectiveness prevalent in modern society which operates alongside the market discourse (Jeffrey, 2002). This preoccupation has led to the introduction of various means by which schools (and other educational institutions) are judged (Perryman, 2006) and their performance made visible (Webb, 2005). This is underpinned by the discourse of school effectiveness which provides a rational and technocratic approach to improving learning. This powerful combination, it is contended, has progressively undermined teacher professionalism.

Ball (2001) articulates the nature of the concern expressed by many authors on the subject of performativity:

'Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation, or even a system of terror in Lyotard's words, that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change.' (p210)

Avis (2005) argues that performativity exists within a blame culture which is reminiscent of Fordism where the worker is subject to rigorous and constant surveillance and that this results in a low trust culture. Webb (2005) concurs with this view and suggests that certain models of educational accountability which are used to normalize practice threaten to punish teachers. The form of accountability in the case of his research in the US was standardized tests.

Perryman's (2006) use of the metaphor of the panopticon, a model prison in which inmates can (but may not) be subject to surveillance at all times, provides another lens on performativity and its impact on schools. She suggests that this mirrors the school situation where the institutional authority (those that seek to make judgments on practice) is invisible while the teachers and students (those who have to perform) feel constantly visible and supervised and that this affects their behaviour even when the measures of regulation may not actually be operational. Ball (2001) suggests that it is not so much the 'possible certainty' of always being seen that is the issue. Rather it is the uncertainty and instability of being judged in different ways, at different times and by different people. He refers to this as a *flow of performativities* rather than a *structure of surveillance*. Ranson (2003) contends that performativity works from the outside in, through regulations, controls and pressures and from the inside out by colonizing lives and producing new subjectivities. Both he and Ball believe that performativity is experienced as a regime of externally imposed controls which result in the fabrication of performance and the selection of the truths which offer the most beneficial account.

New Managerialism, which is inextricably linked to the discourse of performativity (Forrester, 2000), involves the removal of the locus of power from the practising professional to those who are in power within our audit society namely, auditors themselves, policymakers, bureaucrats and politicians, none of whom know anything about the profession (Rose cited in Davis, 2003). According to Simpkins (2000) new managerialism is characterised by an overriding commitment to the values and mission of a specific organisation rather than attachments to client centred, professional values such as equity and care. In outlining the differences between bureau-professionalism and managerialism he suggests that they each represent a contrasting set of values and ideals which justify specific policy and management regimes. While bureau-professionalism emphasises the critical role of the professional and the public service (or welfare) bureaucrat, managerialism justifies managerial power in the expectation that managers should be free to manage. This changed emphasis perceives effective management at school as the primary means of achieving the outcomes required within the performative culture that has been generated (Simpkins, 2000). This has reframed the role of senior managers and resulted in

a climate within which leadership particularly that of the headteacher or principal, has achieved a pre-eminent and 'glamourised' status (Morley & Rasul, 2000) within the discourse of management. This is reflected in the significant array of literature on leadership (e.g. Darling-Hammond, Meyerson & LaPointe, 2009; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Pont, Nusche & Hopkins, 2008) and the government's preoccupation with leadership exemplified in such institutions as the National College for School Leadership and the requirement for heads to be awarded the National Professional Qualification for Headship before taking up post. Simpkins further argues that this has led to a cultural distancing between senior staff and the wider body of teachers in schools, while Grace (1993) raises concern that leadership is in danger of being reduced to no more than a set of technical and management considerations.

Walsh (2006) evaluates the influence of the management environment and the introduction of measurable and quantifiable outcomes and how these have narrowed the horizons of education. He suggests that the move from the liberal humanist tradition in education to the new managerialism has drawn freely on the language and structures of business which are rooted in Taylorism and the machine metaphor and that this has also been accompanied by new educational bureaucracies such as Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and OFSTED which prescribe, control, supervise and valorise particular forms of teaching and learning. This again relates directly to the discourse of school effectiveness which is based on a rational set of assumptions about what is deemed to work but fails to take account of the socio-economic circumstances of individual schools. Ball (1997) challenges the rigid parameters of this official common sense discourse which determines what a good school is and suggests that this has been reduced to a simple set of representations or performativities. He argues that quality assurance systems like Total Quality Management which education has inherited from business act as internal sophisticated disciplinary technologies and that the very strategies employed to make schools more visible and accountable such as league tables create greater opacity as schools seek to manipulate data such as attendance statistics or exam results to present themselves in a more favourable light. He further claims that mechanisms of security and constraint such as TQM and self evaluation submit schools to harsh regimes of

stress, pressure and surveillance which curtail collegiality and have a negative impact on professionalism. In the end he argues that what makes a good or bad school depends on the qualities that are valued and that the *'valuing is to a great extent determined by the indicators and technologies of quality which are predominant at any point in time'* (p 334).

Within this overall context the criterion of school effectiveness has redefined the terms by which the social worth of education is routinely evaluated (Walsh, 2006). Morley and Rasul (2000) support the view that the school effectiveness paradigm is an example of new managerialism in education and that it is part of the growing apparatus of accountability which places the onus for effective schooling onto teachers leaving the state with a regulatory role. Indeed, they suggest that the school effectiveness industry has become legitimized through public policy, finance and research.

Various writers critique the elements of this apparatus of accountability. Mahoney and Hextall (2001) clarify the assumptions underpinning performance management with teachers *'performing and conforming'* and raise concerns about individual equity. Mahoney (2004a) reports teachers' aversion to the commodification of self involved in performance management although they also note that once it is in place and well managed teachers were more receptive. Mahoney, Hextall and Menter (2004) suggest that threshold assessment contributes to the masculinising of the teaching profession. Gleeson and Husbands (2003) working on the premise that performance management is not working argue for greater 'authenticity' in the way education practice might drive, rather than be driven by, policy while Elliot (2001) focuses on the limitations of performance indicators and draws attention to the pace at which the performative culture is expected to work.

There is no doubt that the nature of teachers' lives has changed significantly within what Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark & Warne (2002) call an 'economy of performance'. Of particular importance, however, has been the silencing of dissent within a system which is characterised as both inevitable and natural (Davis, 2003).

Resistance to any or all aspects of the prevailing climate in education is deemed to be ignorance of the 'real' issues, sheer cussedness or, perhaps more sinisterly, serves as a reminder to management that an individual is replaceable. In Davis' words:

The individual's sense of agency and freedom through which professional energy, dedication and power were formerly generated are overlaid and in tension with an almost subliminal anxiety and fear of surveillance' (p 93)

This has an inevitable and consequential impact on the emotions and feelings of teachers working within this regime which will be explored in the next section.

2.4 Teacher emotions

The first part of this literature review outlines the complexities of the landscape within which Academies were conceived and have been developed, a landscape in which the discourse of performativity has established and maintained its dominance. This section provides a counter-discourse to the rationalist assumptions which underpin performativity and our national policy agenda in education and highlights the importance of teachers' emotions and how they inform their professional identity and their reactions to change. The emotional nature of teachers' work and the role it plays in relation to learning has been consistently ignored within education policy (O'Connor, 2008) and yet as A. Hargreaves (1998) points out '*good teaching is charged with positive emotion*' and good teachers '*are emotional passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy (p 835)*'. Despite this, emotion continues to be portrayed as something that needs to be managed (A. Hargreaves, 1998; 2000; Hartley, 2004) to ensure that emotional labour is congruent with the needs of the organisation and until fairly recently teachers' emotions have not been a topic worthy of serious academic consideration (A. Hargreaves , 2000; Nias, 1996; Shapiro, 2009).

Focussing on the role of emotions in teachers' lives primarily from a social constructivist perspective rather than from a personal, psychological or individual standpoint, this section seeks to explore a range of literature which

challenges the assumption that performativity and the regulatory framework which dominate teachers' working lives are the sole or even the most important means of raising standards in our classrooms. It will also explore the proposition that policymakers, leaders and teachers themselves should take cognisance of the powerful and complex nature of emotion and its impact on change and how change impacts on teachers' emotions and their ability to do their job.

2.4.1 What is emotion?

Like other aspects of human behaviour emotion is very difficult to define (P. Kleinginna & A. Kleinginna, 1981). Sutton and Wheatley (2003) note that social and personality psychologists cannot even agree on what emotions are while Rowe (2005) suggests that searching for a dictionary definition of the term can be a circular process. In other words you end up exactly where you started and none the wiser. Eschewing simple dictionary definitions Rowe argues that emotions are yet another way that humans have of creating meaning and that unlike thoughts or wishes an emotion such as anger or love is located at the very centre of our being. She further argues that our meanings connect with each other to form an emotional meaning structure which is constantly evolving and changing and is composed of both simple emotions (joy and anger) and more complex emotions which take account of the perceptions of others and which are inevitably generated when people live in groups. According to Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995, p. 197), an emotion can be understood as a strong commotion of mind that has a disorganizing effect on the way an individual experiences and values him/herself and their environment. In his study of emotion and emotionality in relation to change Carr (2001) develops a Freudian psychoanalytical approach suggesting that emotion and emotionality are, from the earliest period of an individual's maturation, crucial to the development of a person's identity and hence to the development of their professional identity. Others also support the idea that emotion is critical to the formation of identity (e.g. Reio, 2005; Shapiro, 2009) and yet this does not help us to define what emotion is.

Beatty (2000) contends that Hochschild(1990) provides the most useful working definition. Hochschild defines emotion as an *'awareness of four elements that we usually experience at the same time: (a) appraisals of a situation, (b) changes in bodily sensations, (c) the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and (d) a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the first three elements.'* (p 118-119). Hochschild also proposes that a feeling is a milder version of an emotion. Beatty is attracted to this definition as result of its inclusiveness and flexibility.

Hochschild's definition resembles what others refer to as the emotional process. Wade and Tarvis (cited in Bovey & Hede, 2001a) suggest that *'emotion can be described as a state of arousal involving facial and bodily changes, brain activation, subjective feelings, cognitive appraisals which can be either conscious or unconscious and rational or irrational, and with a tendency towards action'* (p 375). They also specify the primary, or in Rowe's terms simple, emotions which have been identified by psychology researchers and list among these fear, anger, sadness, joy, surprise, disgust and contempt. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) highlight the complexity of the emotional process and describe how it is made up of key components: appraisal, subjective experience, physiological change, facial or other forms of emotional expression, and action tendencies. *Appraisal* involves making a judgement about the significance or relevance of an event in respect of personal goals or concerns while *subjective experience* is the way in which we each experience a particular emotion. They support the view that all emotional processes involve physiological changes which include the physical ways in which we express emotion including facial expression and body language and concur that emotion triggers a reaction or response tendency in us. They emphasise that each component influences the others but each is also partially independent.

For the purposes of this literature review and in the knowledge that over 20 years ago Klenginna and Kleniginna (ibid) identified no fewer than 92 definitions of emotion, it may be advisable to embrace the truism implicit in Young's statement cited in the same article' that *'almost everyone except the psychologist knows what an*

emotion is' and accept that when teachers talk about anger or frustration or celebrate joy and excitement that we have a good enough understanding of what this means.

2.4.2 Rationality versus emotionality

The emphasis on rationality throughout our systems and structures has led to a relative neglect of research into emotional issues in organisational life in general although there have been some notable exceptions (e.g. Fineman, 1997; Hopfl & Linstead, 1997) and it is only recently that the centrality of teachers' emotions in their work has begun to be explored in educational research (Shapiro, 2009). Given that rationality dominates not only the way our organisations are managed but our traditional approach to the management of change this is hardly surprising. Carr (2001) explores what he refers to as the binary opposition between rationality and emotionality, otherwise known as the '*good guy*' and the '*bad guy*', drawing attention to the prevalent management conception that emotion should be avoided or controlled to ensure that it does not interfere with the rational processes required for success. Some writers however, particularly feminist writers, challenge the view that emotions should be seen this way arguing that emotions and feelings are not in opposition to cognition and rationality but that they are interdependent (Zembylas, 2004). Reflecting the views of both Weber (1948) and Albrow (1992), Hopfl and Linstead (1997) suggest that it is the very centrality of emotion to organisational life which has required the imposition of rules and regulations and that rationality is an artificial construct which we have developed to ensure that we can successfully and effectively achieve our goals. This view is supported by Gabriel and Griffiths (2002) who suggest that while organisations are not supposed to be emotion-free zones they were intended to be zones where rationality and reason were the dominant forces. Emotions therefore are complex, hard to define and difficult to manage and while some try to deny their existence (Shapiro, 2009) their presence is continually felt at every level within an organisation. Increasingly this is being recognised and writers are making a case for considering the role of emotion in learning, in forging teachers' professional identity, in teaching, in leadership and management and in the process of change.

2.4.3 Emotions, learning and identity

The relationship between emotions and learning is of particular importance in the context of change if change is, as Fullan (1993) asserts, a key component of learning. We have all, to a greater or lesser extent, experienced what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) refers to as 'flow'; that is complete absorption in the moment when performance in a given activity feels effortless and results in feelings of joy and satisfaction and represents an occasion when we are truly in touch with our emotions. Hopfl and Linstead (1997) describe this as an outcome of learning arrived at when the levels of challenge and personal competence are in balance. However, one of the major issues associated with an over emphasis on rationality in our culture is that we are less knowledgeable about our own feelings than we should be and that we discount or deny how we feel, rationalise our emotions or simply keep them hidden (Goleman, 1996; Hopfl & Linstead, 1997). This is reflected at a personal level by Shapiro (2009) who felt inhibited about expressing emotions in the staff room and who also suggests that emotions are generally treated as a potential threat to the constructed teacher identity which determines how teachers should behave and interact. One of the first challenges for the management of emotions therefore is learning to feel, knowing what we feel, discovering which of our feelings create difficulties for ourselves and for others and becoming sensitive to the feelings of those around us. Only then will we be in a position to develop strategies for managing our feelings in the context of both our personal and working lives (Hopfl & Linstead, 1997, p 9). Goleman's popular text (1996) argues that we can all develop basic emotional competencies. While this is an attractive proposition it is challenged by Boler (cited in A. Hargreaves, 2000) who believes that presenting emotions as simply another set of skills to be learned sets limits on how we understand and try to shape the emotional work that people undertake.

Fineman (1997) emphasises that emotions should be considered not just as a by-product or interference with learning but as intrinsic to what is learned and how learning takes place and are, in fact, an inevitable feature of learning. He notes that emotions shape and inform all manner of work related actions such as decision-making, training, persuading and recruiting and contends that trying to split cognition from emotion reinforces the

notion that learning is a rational process which can be managed or organised into carefully planned, bite-sized pieces. While Fineman recognises that emotions such as anxiety can, and do, interfere with learning he also points out the paradox that negative as well as positive emotions can lead to positive learning experiences. He goes so far as to propose a new term of 'cogmotion' to suggest that what is learned (cognition) cannot be appreciated or understood without the discourse of emotion. This view is supported by Frijda (2000), A. Hargreaves (1998) and Nias (1996).

Gabriel and Griffiths (2002) support the view that learning is not simply a cognitive process involving the brain but also an emotional process and suggest learning in conditions which are positive or motivating is very different from learning in conditions where there is a negative culture or where individuals are hostile to each other. Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001) argue that emotion and learning should be studied together as they are interrelated, interactive and interdependent. Together they provide powerful sources of meaning and direction which can support or inhibit both individuals and organisations in understanding reality and their place within it.

Drawing on research outlined in a special issue of Learning and Instruction (2005) which focuses specifically on whether what we feel affects how we learn, Sansone and Thoman (2005) identify a particular theme which emerges from this series of papers on student learning, that is, the dynamic role that is played by emotion over time. While previously emotions have tended to be identified as either outcomes or predictors of learning, it is clear that emotions function in both roles over a period of time and that patterns of changing emotions and their impact over time are significant in the learning process. They note that while previous research generally portrayed the view that negative emotions such as anger are 'bad' for learning while positive emotions such as happiness are 'good' the idea that emotions vary over a period of time and will be different for different individuals in different contexts suggests that it is *'the dynamic patterns of positive and negative emotions at certain points in time or in a given context that may be good or bad for learning'* (p509). They further suggest

that students may experience different emotions at different points of time or even more than one emotion at the same time and that these qualitatively different patterns of learning at different stages of engagement may lead to distinct learning outcomes. The importance of the role of emotions and how they develop over time also features in Zembylas' ethnographic study of a teacher and her search for self identity (2004).

The complex role of emotion is no less important in the learning and development of teachers. Of particular relevance is the study by Hodgen and Askew (2007) which examines one teacher's reaction to developing professional expertise in the teaching of maths within the primary phase, maths being a subject frequently associated with anxiety and negative emotions for many of us. Their study focuses on how emotion can be understood to have both individual and social dimensions and they suggest that professional change or learning involves, at least in part, becoming a different teacher or different person. While disconnection with maths was a consequence of a specific negative experience at school a key part of this teacher's emotional and identity reconstruction in later life resulted from giving her the emotional space to challenge the authority of a new maths teacher and confront her previous negative emotions and feelings in relation to learning maths. The subsequent forging of a new identity as a teacher of maths was achieved as a result of a deep rooted compulsion to change generated both by external forces (the need to take up a new position as maths Coordinator in her school) and an internally developed and maintained desire and newly discovered love of the subject. Hodgen and Askew argue that this could not have been achieved without the construction of an affective frame or emotional space to question and challenge deeply rooted negative emotions about the subject. This requirement to provide emotional space to develop understanding is also reflected in the work of Zembylas (2005) who argues that teachers need 'spaces for coping' with change.

For Geijsel and Meijers (2005) the formation of identity is tied to creative learning which requires an environment that allows learners (in this case teachers) to express their emotions and feelings. They propose that identity formation involves making sense of one's experiences and what one is doing and that this is a

learning process in which emotions have a key role. Thus experiences associated with both positive and negative emotions provide an opportunity for growth or learning. They argue that understanding a situation is insufficient and that identity formation is the result of making personal (emotional) sense of new experiences. They refer to this as '*identity learning*' but note that teachers' professional identity is rarely conceptualised in this way in the literature on educational learning or change. Professional identity learning, in their terms, involves a relationship between the social-cognitive construction of new meanings and individual, emotional sense-making of new experiences.

Developing an understanding of our own emotions and how we respond to particular situations and why is key to our ability to successfully embrace learning and to the way in which our self and professional identities are formed and being in touch with our emotions whether they are positive or negative impacts on cognitive reasoning. While negative emotions can lead to dissonance and difficulties in learning time, space and a safe environment can be key factors in developing an understanding of our emotional responses and coming to terms with them in ways which enhance learning and support meaning making. It could be argued that a teacher's primary responsibility is to create these conditions for learning for their students, to develop an environment in which they can each flourish and find meaning in what they are being taught and what they are expected to learn. At the same time, however, teachers have the same need to work and develop in a similar environment so that they too, can flourish and make sense of the professional demands of their work. Given the emotional labour involved in teaching and the demands of establishing emotional bonds with their students perhaps their need in this respect is greater than in some other professions.

2.4.4 Emotions, teaching and identity

The link between emotions and professional identity is one which is reflected in various ways throughout the literature cited in this review. While cognitive aspects of teaching are critical to success in the classroom it could be argued that emotion is more influential than cognition in the professional identity of teachers (Shapiro,

2009). Teachers invest themselves in their work (Nias, 1996), teachers' experiences in their personal lives are intimately linked to their professional roles (Day, 2002), teachers often experience acute emotions in relation to purposes in their work which are ill defined or contradictory (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005), teachers' job satisfaction is derived from their interactions with students and the positive influence they are able to have on them (A. Hargreaves, 1998; Lasky, 2005). Teaching is an emotional practice, teaching and learning involve emotional understanding, teaching is a form of emotional labour and teachers' emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes (A. Hargreaves, 1998). As Keltchermans (2005) succinctly sums up *'feelings are just self evidently part of the experience of being a teacher'* (p996) and thus of a teacher's professional identity.

The mostly frequently discussed positive emotions in relation to teachers and teaching are love and caring (Acker, 1992; Noddings, 1992; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). While caring has traditionally been associated with women teachers (Woods & Jeffery, 1996) this is not always supported by other research (e.g. A. Hargreaves, 1998). This perhaps depends on the definition of caring. O'Connor's definition (2008) is directly related to a teacher's desire to motivate, help or inspire their students and to their individual commitment to their work. She argues that by making the choice to care about their students the three teachers in her study were able to construct a professional identity which was congruent with their personal philosophical and humanistic beliefs about teaching. Other positive emotions include pleasure, joy and satisfaction when teachers are able to fulfil their desire to motivate students (A. Hargreaves, 1998; Hatch, 1993). They also experience positive emotions when they accomplish things, when colleagues are supportive, when students cooperate and when they return to see teachers once they have left school (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Quite simply it is difficult to separate a teacher's sense of professional identity from their caring about, and liking of, children (Blackmore, 1998).

Although less frequently mentioned, negative emotions inevitably present a counter balance. Frustration and anger can result from goal incongruence including student misbehaviour (A. Hargreaves, 2000; Sutton cited in

Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), uncooperative colleagues (Nias, 1989) or parents who are not perceived as caring or supportive (Lasky, 2000) as well as students who do not achieve through laziness or inattention (Reyna & Weiner cited in Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Anxiety (Blackmore, 1996), helplessness (Kelchtermans, 1996), guilt (A. Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991) and sadness (Sutton 2000 cited in Sutton & Wheatley, 2003) are also emotions which are significant features in the lives of teachers.

Teacher emotions, whether positive or negative, impact on their cognitions, their motivation and on the students they teach (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Equally students are aware of teachers' emotions and inevitably respond to them. High levels of emotional understanding are required in a teacher's working life but as A. Hargreaves (2000) points out, when this emotional understanding goes awry, when teachers misunderstand their students' feelings or reactions, this can have serious consequences for students learning and will inevitably impact on standards. A key part of a teacher's role is the management of their emotions particularly in the classroom environment and manufacturing or masking emotion is a fundamental expectation within the profession. Emotional labour of this nature can be rewarding when teachers are able to work in conditions which allow them to do their job well or draining when they are forced to manufacture emotions to suit the purposes of others (A. Hargreaves, 2000). Given that teachers experience such a wide range of emotions as part and parcel of their everyday lives the impact of externally imposed change whether on a small or large scale inevitably increases the complexity and intensity of the lives of professionals who already invest a significant amount of personal feeling in their work.

2.4.5 Emotions, educational change and identity

One of the common themes in research over the past two decades has been teacher concern about the reform agenda and the increasing intensification of their work (Day, 1999; Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington & Gu, 2007; Helsby, 2000; Mahoney, Hextall & Menter, 2004). Teachers report increased pressures on time, increased emotional burdens and a significantly greater impact on their home lives (Mahoney et al, 2004). Amongst

curriculum leaders who feel that they are being held to account for factors outside their control there is also a disturbing but commonly expressed resigned acceptance about the ever increasing levels of professional responsibility and work overload (Mahoney et al, 2004).

The intensification of teachers' work is exemplified in research on specific reforms and the impact that they have on teacher emotions. These include the impact of threshold assessment (Mahoney et al, 2004), school self evaluation (Hall & Noyes, 2009) and OFSTED (P. Case, S. Case & Catling, 2000; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Perryman, 2007). Perhaps the most important finding from these studies is that it is not simply the nature of the reform which affects teachers' working lives and professional identity but the way in which reforms are implemented. Mahoney et al (ibid) identify that the way in which individual schools handled threshold assessment impacted on the degree to which teachers felt exposed and vulnerable. Hall and Noyes (ibid) report that the introduction of the externally mandated reform of school self evaluation was mediated by the culture prevalent in individual schools. While the rigorous process was actively embraced in some schools, in others, teachers felt oppressed and professionally compromised by a system that was more about compliance than educational endeavour. In the case of OFSTED inspections the way in which the process is implemented is determined by the national framework and how this is mediated by the OFSTED team. Both anecdotal evidence and reports in the press have focussed on the stress and anxiety caused by this regulatory framework, views which have been supported by research. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) document the professional uncertainty induced in teachers in a primary school resulting from anxiety and feelings of professional inadequacy resulting from the technicist approach of an OFSTED inspection. They describe the emotional reactions of staff which ranged from anger and anguish to despair and guilt as '*an assault on teachers' sense of professionalism*' (p 340). The writers assert that the 'trauma' experienced by staff was not a simple emotional response of the moment nor was it a failure of leadership rather it was a politically and socially constructed phenomenon (p 325). The impact of these negative emotions is summarised thus:

the strength and pain of these emotions are a kind of rite of passage as teachers are impressed against their will from one status (professional) to another (technicist). The inspection induces a trauma which penetrates to the innermost being of the teacher' (p340)

In her analysis of inspection in a secondary school in special measures over a decade later, Perryman (2007) reaches a similar conclusion finding that the negative emotional impact of inspection went beyond the oft reported issues of stress and overwork and left teachers experiencing a loss of power and control which led to very strong emotions of anger and fear characterised at one point by hysteria, and disaffection. While the same staff experienced elation when the school emerged from special measures, it is worth noting that this was subsequently followed by a feeling of anti-climax as staff began to question the nature and purpose of the inspection process and why it had had to be endured. Primary teachers in Case et al's (2000) study who expressed feelings of frustration, resentment and fatigue reported that it typically took individual teachers a year to recover emotionally. In contrast, however, Gray and Gardner's findings (1999) on a different kind of inspection system in Northern Ireland are illuminating. Their research found that despite reservations about the extent of anxiety induced by the process most school principals found the inspection programme to be both supportive and professional. It may be that this was a direct result of the nature of the inspection system in question which had retained a more developmental approach akin to the former HMI regime in England rather than the judgemental approach experienced by teachers and schools in England.

The new accountabilities resulting from managerialism and performativity and the resulting intensification of teachers' work have also irrevocably altered the social relations within (Ball & Gewirtz, 1996; Reay, 1996) and between schools producing what Blackmore (1994) refers to as '*new psychic or emotional economies*'. Research into the working lives of primary teachers (Trotman, 2000) reinforces this view finding that environments characterised by low trust relations between colleagues and between teachers and parents led to a breakdown in personal relationships detrimental to the emotional and physical well being of individual teachers. This in turn

has negative implications for the organisation itself, a finding which is not surprising if emotions form part of the social glue that holds organisations together (Blackmore, 1994).

Context is equally important in how teachers experience change. A special edition of 'Teaching and Teacher Education' dedicated to the issue of emotions and educational change highlights the critical importance of context in relation to identity, emotion and change. While the qualitative nature of these studies mean that it is not appropriate to generalise they do provide further insights into this highly complex issue. Reio (2005) draws particular attention to the uncertain environment created by change and the way this affects not only teachers' risk taking but also their identity formation and learning. Lasky (2005) focuses on teacher vulnerability which can be a highly positive emotional experience when teachers are willing to take risks to establish rapport with their students or inefficacious if they feel defenceless, fearful or anxious. While open vulnerability to students and a willingness to take emotional risks play an important role in teacher agency, Lasky's findings indicate that teachers experience inefficacious vulnerability as a result of the erosion of their professionalism and the disappearance of their valued work conditions as a direct result of the reform context within which they are working. Context is also specifically relevant in the case of David, a highly motivated teacher initially enthused by a proposed reform in The Netherlands, who is ridden by guilt, anxiety, anger and shame as a result of the way in which reform unfolds in his particular school (van Veen et al, 2005). Not only is David's commitment to the reform affected but his professional identity is jeopardised by the way in which the reform was implemented in his specific context.

Age and gender are also contextual variables which affect teachers' responses to change. A. Hargreaves (2005) offers some evidence that willingness to accept change decreases with age or with the stage that teachers have reached in their career. While younger teachers are perceived as more amenable and receptive to change by older colleagues, older teachers are perceived by younger teachers and report themselves as experiencing decreased levels of energy and commitment which impact on their emotional response to change. Older

colleagues are also inevitably subject to what Abrahamson calls repetitive change syndrome (2004) and as a result are more likely to resist change although it should be noted that resistance is not necessarily always a negative response (Giles, 2006). In contrast to the findings of A. Hargreaves, Darby's findings (2009) indicate that both veteran and beginning teachers are energised by the development of new skills and the enhanced self understanding they experience as a result of the change process (p 1171). Gender provides yet another variable. Female teachers are more likely to be comfortable changing their teaching subject during the course of their career as they see themselves as teachers first and subject specialists second. In contrast men's skills are more strongly associated with their personal and professional identity (Paechter, 2002). In short, as Paechter notes:

'teachers do not come to innovations as blank slates: they bring their histories, attitudes to change, trajectories within and outside the profession all of which interactto affect how a known change will be received, accommodated, implemented and resisted'(p 143).

It is not difficult therefore to see how challenging it is for teachers to make sense of change given this wide range of variables.

The focus in educational literature has primarily been on cognitive meaning-making in relation to change with the emotional side, the sense making, remaining a black box (Geisel & Meijers, 2005). Where emotions have been a key feature in change management literature this has centred on the strategies that leaders and managers can employ to effectively manage the emotions of their employees, namely those emotions which could negatively impact on the success of a change programme. The management of resistance, for example, has provided particularly fertile ground for some management texts. And yet as Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001) note, while *'organisational change often forces individuals to come face to face with their ignorance and vulnerability* (which often can and does lead to resistance, stress and other negatively correlated emotions) ... *It can also stimulate innovation, growth and creativity'* (p8) and result in new *action tendencies* (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). While the research currently available on emotions in relation to educational change largely

focuses on the negative impact of the reform agenda one or two studies do nevertheless demonstrate the truth of this assertion (e.g. Antonacopolou & Gabriel, 2001; Oplatka, 2005).

As has already been noted when teachers are unable to make sense of, or find meaning in, change this inevitably results in negative emotions and it is these negative responses to the now well established performative culture in education which has dominated in the literature. Teachers feel a deep sense of alienation (Menter & Muschamp, 1999) anger, fear and grief resulting from a dissonance of what they perceive to be 'real work' (i.e. teaching) and the type of performative work which is required by the new discourse that saps both their energy and time (Blackmore, 1994). There has also been a marked impact on teachers' morale, job satisfaction, motivation (Evans, 2000) and on their health (Brown, Ralph & Brember, 2002; Trotman & Woods, 2000).

It is inevitable that such a range of negative emotions will have a detrimental impact on the health and well being of at least some members of the teaching profession resulting in extreme cases in stress related illness. Kyriacou (2001) defines teacher stress as *'the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, frustration or depression resulting from some aspect of their work'* (p28). While it is recognised that stress is not always negative (Lupien, McEwen, Gunnar & Heim, 2009), there is now a wealth of evidence that supports the view that teaching is indeed a high stress profession (e.g. Brown et al, 2002; Dunham and Varma, 1998; Kyriacou, 2001, 2010). While there are many reasons for stress including pupil behaviour (Day & Qing, 2009), class size (Englehart, 2006) and workload (Butt & Lance, 2005; Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009), innovation and change have also been identified as key factors in increasing levels of stress amongst teachers (Brown et al, *ibid*). Travers and Cooper (cited in Trotman 2000) put forward a strong argument that it is no coincidence that rising levels of teacher stress coincided with the Education Reform Act and several studies (although not all e.g. Everton, Turner, Hargreaves & Pell, 2007; Smith & Gorard et al, 2007) have reported negatively on the resulting impact on the profession's image in terms of difficulties in terms of recruitment and retention (Barmby, 2006; Gray & Behan, 2005).

Both Trotman and Woods (2000) and Carlyle and Woods (2002) focus on the individual experiences of teachers who have reached critical levels of stress as a result of the changed nature of their work. Teachers in the former study developed coping strategies many of which took them out of the profession altogether or resulted in downshifting and decreased levels of responsibility within the new accountability frameworks. Carlyle and Woods's exploration of an identity passage navigated through the emotions further demonstrates the power of the emotions not only in teachers' daily work but also in their recovery from the negative emotions resulting from significant change in their working lives.

While some teachers have had to forge a new identity for themselves as a result of occupational stress, most have had to battle to maintain their sense of identity in a climate which increasingly demands compliance (Day et al, 2007). Day et al (2007), along with others (e.g. Mahoney & Hextall, 2000; Whitty, 1997), argue that the erosion of autonomy and discretionary decision-making resulting from our performative climate has challenged teachers' professionalism resulting in feelings of ambivalence, conflict, a culture of loneliness and burn-out . As early as 1989 Nias noted that the dissatisfiers of teaching were beginning to outweigh the satisfiers and there is now a considerable body of research which suggests that this is a trend that seems to have continued rather than abated for a significant proportion of the profession.

Grimett, Dagenais, D'Amico, Jacquet and Ilieva (2008) provide a different perspective on this issue arguing that there are two features of teachers' discourse at play during a period of intense policy change, namely emotional politics and professional identity construction. They suggest that teachers are neither captive to policy changes nor are they free from them but that they must live in the space between. Their study of change in Greater Vancouver indicated that there are two distinct discourses in the minds of teachers. A political discourse characterised by emotional despair and a counter discourse characterised by emotional satisfaction. While the former reflects the views expounded by theorists such as Ball (2003) that teachers do suffer from the pressures

exerted by external forces, Grimmer et al also found that teachers' experience and critique of policy change and implementation are tempered and shaped by local pedagogical concerns about the needs of learners. This glimpse of hope is also perceived by Day and Smethern (2009) who question whether teachers have actually lost their professionalism. While they accept that there is no doubt that the working lives of teachers have changed and that past freedoms have been eroded they also note that most teachers still remain in schools sustaining their commitment to those they teach and their passion for learning (p154). As Blackmore (1998) suggests educational politics, values and emotions are intertwined and our emotions can provide evidence of transformation and resistance as they inform our moral and cognitive perceptions and surface manifestations of opposition to, or discomfort with, political reforms.

Many teachers not only maintain their commitment to teaching and learning but some positively welcome change. A. Hargreaves' study (1998) of Grade 7 and 8 teachers in Canada who were very supportive of a specific change programme provides some useful insights into how educational change affects teachers' emotional responses. Whether in response to structures, changes in pedagogy or curriculum planning his research found that the way that teachers respond to change is filtered through their feelings about their students and how the change affects, or is likely to affect, their enthusiasm for learning and their progress. The emotional bonds that teachers had with students in this study underpinned virtually everything they did. Asking the reasons why teachers feel so passionately about their students Nias (1996) proposes not only that teaching is a job which involves interaction with others and thereby inevitably has an emotional dimension, but also that teachers invest so much of themselves in their work and so heavily that this often results in a merging of professional and personal identities.

2.4.6 A way forward

Teachers varied interpretations and experiences with reforms, their prior experience, context, factors such as age and the ways in which reform is implemented all contribute to the equally varied emotions that teachers

experience as a result. Emotions also vary according to the extent to which teachers feel powerful or powerless within the change process (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). As we have seen their professional identity is threatened by the circumstances of change within our performative climate and some unfortunately leave the profession as a result or comply within the externally imposed change programmes without emotionally engaging with them. As a result the impact of externally mandated reform is inevitably limited in individual classrooms.

Writers in more recent times have begun to urge both those in power within schools and those in power within the government to take greater cognisance of the emotions of teachers and how they affect and are affected by reform efforts (e.g. Darby, 2009; Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). It is argued that the discourse of educational reform must acknowledge and honour the centrality of the emotions to the processes and outcomes of teaching, learning and caring (A. Hargreaves, 1998 p 850) and subsequently actively consider and engage teacher emotions in the change process rather than attempt to simply manage those emotions. This should happen at both the institutional and national level although individual teachers must also accept some responsibility for making meaning during times of change.

At the school level Zembylas (2005) advocates that school leaders should create '*spaces for coping*' to support teacher enactment of practices that attempt to deal with reform in terms of awareness, feelings and relating. She emphasises that structures and the nature of interactions within schools can either support or hinder the processing of teacher emotions during periods of change and that in order to confront deeply held beliefs or fears teachers need both organisational and collegial emotional support. Reio (2005) believes that there should also be explicit acceptance that different teachers will respond differently to reform and individual change efforts should be designed to align more closely with teacher age, career stage and contextual realities. This would be supported by moving more policy making to the local level to enhance emotional understanding between teachers and policy makers and reduce the rationality of the reform process (A. Hargreaves, 1998). Although Schmidt and Datnow (2005) emphasise that teachers need to accept that change is invariably

characterised by conflict, tensions and ambiguity and that disturbance to deeply held beliefs is a natural part of the process they propose that responsibility for managing this lies with leaders and managers who should both invest time and resources and offer unconditional emotional support to enable teachers to understand and find meaning in change.

At a personal level Zembylas (2005) encourages teachers to utilise an 'emotional diary' to catalogue not only their emotions but also their responses to them. Vocalising their complex and even contradictory emotional responses and supporting access to teachers' emotional worlds could also be supported through sharing the outcomes of class reflective writing (Shapiro, 2009) while A. Hargreaves advocates mapping personal emotional geographies (2001).

At a national level reformers should incorporate the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning into professional standards for teachers, leaders and managers; emotional identity should become an integral part of teaching practice and teacher training (Shapiro, 2009); policy makers should find out more about those expected to implement the policy change (Paechter, 2003); a positive emotional economy should be developed which is based on collaborative models of professionalism (Blackmore, 1998). There is no doubt that each of these advocates for greater awareness of the emotional dimension of teaching, learning and change would support the views expounded by Kelchtermans (2005):

Polymakers – as well as the technocratic educationalists who eagerly assist them – would benefit from acknowledging the fundamental complexities in teaching and being a teacher. ...Teachers' ongoing struggles with demands for change, as well as their thoughtful professional hesitations about these demands (resistance) may constitute a more" effective" warranty for "good education" than their compliance to the policy agendas and the accompanying professional "self understanding" they demand. (p1005)

It is not surprising, therefore that each of the writers cited above also emphasises the need for further research into this highly complex and multifaceted issue.

2.5 Responses to organisational change

This chapter concludes by locating the discussion on teacher emotions and change within the wider context of affective responses to organisational change. The following section aims to identify some of the key issues in the literature to complement the preceding section. It does not attempt to provide a comprehensive review of work in this field.

2.5.1 Responses to change

All change involves some form of loss (Bryant & Wolfram Cox, 2006) and a move from the known to the unknown (Coghlan, 2007). It can bring joy, satisfaction and advantages to some and pain, stress and disadvantages to others (Raschid, Sambasivan & Azmawani, 2004). It is inevitable, therefore, that change triggers emotional reactions in those subject to the change and yet much of the literature on change in organisations has been written from the perspective of change managers as opposed to change recipients (Bovey & Hede, 2001a & b; Dibella, 2007; Vakola, Tsaousis & Nikolaou 2004). Scott and Jaffe (cited in Bovey & Hede, 2001a) suggest that there are four phases experienced by individuals faced with change: initial denial, resistance, gradual exploration and eventual commitment. Liu and Perrewe (2005) also propose four stages. In this case they suggest that employees who are subject to a change event undergo primary appraisal which is characterised by high emotional arousal and mixed responses, secondary appraisal in which individuals move towards either a positive or negative response which in turn impacts on their coping behaviours in the third stage. In the final stage emotions become more evaluative and lead to action tendencies. There is clearly a distinct difference between these two theoretical positions on the phases of change with the former offering a simple model which assumes that all responses will initially be negative and conclude with acceptance and the latter taking greater cognisance of the emotional dimension of responses in the face of change.

Focussing on the type of responses that individuals have to change rather than the different stages, Bennis (cited in Coghlan, *ibid*) suggests that there are six types of response: opposition, resistance, tolerance, acceptance, support and embracement. The findings of various researchers concur with some or all of these types (e.g. Dawson, 1994; Iverson, 1996; Raschid et al, 2004) which on the surface seem to present a straightforward classification of the ways in which individuals respond. In contrast, emphasising both the complexity and the intensity of the affective dimension of an individual's response to change Perlamn and Takacs (cited in Vakola et al, 2005) contend that there are many emotional states that an individual can experience during a change process. These include equilibrium, denial, anger, bargaining, chaos, depression, resignation, openness, readiness and emergence (p 90). The intensity of these emotions has been likened to an individual's response to traumatic changes such as death or grief (Oswick & Grant, 1996).

Responses to, or consequences of, change have been categorised as appropriate or dysfunctional (Austell, 2007), adaptive or maladaptive (Bovey & Hede, 2001a), positive, negative, neutral or mixed (Smollan, 2006), uncertain or defensive (Vince & Broussine, 1996) and change recipients have been characterised as survivors or victims (Paulsen, Callan, Grice, Rooney, Gallois, Jones, Jimmieson & Bordia et al, 2005). The variations between these characterisations reflect two concerns about research on employees' responses to change articulated by Buchanan and Dawson (2007). They argue that multiple change narratives compete with each other because they are personally self serving, politically motivated or informed only by partial knowledge of what happened. They suggest that the dominant narratives that 'stick' do so as a result of *inter alia* fact, narrator credibility and influence and skilled storytelling and that these are often 'after the change accounts' which both shape and are shaped by the change process. Buchanan and Dawson also voice concern about the role of the researcher indicating that while participants in research studies may offer accounts of change which support their sense-making, impression management and the advance of political agendas the same is also true of researchers who also become characters in the story potentially helping to promote some narratives over others. This could

explain the differences in the reported types of response particularly those which are presented as polar opposites e.g. appropriate or dysfunctional. These apparently clear divisions in response belie the complexity of emotions and the emotional process (Elfenbein, 2007). As Oreg, Vakola and Armenakis (2011) note in their extensive review of literature on this subject researchers use a variety of ways of conceptualising the reactions of change recipients and there is little consistency in the terms they use or their definitions. What is clear, despite the concerns raised by Buchanan and Dawson, is that individuals experience change in different ways (Bryant, 2006; Carnall, 1986) and demonstrate different cognitive, behavioural and emotional responses to the same change events.

2.5.2 Resistance to change

While the last phase of change proposed may indeed be eventual commitment (Scott and Jaffe, *ibid*) and some change recipients may accept or embrace change (Bennis, *ibid*) much of the literature, whether written from the perspective of the change manager or the change recipient, points to a predominance of negative emotional responses to the change process (Jones et al, 2008) although there are some exceptions (e.g. Antacopolou & Gabriel, 2001; French, 2001). High on the list of negative responses is resistance to change, resistance being a label generally applied by change managers to the perceived behaviour of those who seem unwilling to accept or implement change (Coughlan, 2007). The term resistance suggests that individuals who are unwilling to change have made a conscious decision to resist. However, as the findings of Bovey and Hede (2001a) indicate behavioural intentions to resist may be based on unconscious defence mechanisms which, by definition, individuals are unaware of. Bovey and Hede identify five maladaptive behavioural intentions associated with resistance to change: projection, acting out, isolation of affect, disassociation and denial each of which results in or is triggered by an emotional response. Their research shows that individuals who are unconsciously inclined to use any of these maladaptive defence mechanisms are more likely to resist change.

Piderit (2000) argues for a new conceptualisation of resistance to change suggesting that traditional perspectives of resistance whether as a behavioural, emotional or cognitive response simplify what is an extremely complex process and that a multi-dimensional definition of employees' attitudes allows for the possibility of different reactions along different dimensions. This conceptualisation explicitly recognises that on occasions individuals experience mixed responses or ambivalent feelings in response to what is happening. Bryant (2006) provides another perspective on the issue suggesting that voice is often confused with resistance to change and that employees who may appear to be resistant are often using voice as a means of articulating concern about ownership and control of jobs and seeking information about job security. Supporting this position Piderit (2000) contends that in studies on resistance to change researchers have overlooked the potentially positive intentions motivated by valid concerns that may result in negative responses to change. As Coughlan (ibid) points out change recipients may not necessarily see themselves as resistant, this may simply be the perception of the change managers.

2.5.3 Antecedents of change

While the consequences of change result in a plethora of emotions, many of them perceived to be negative, there is an equally broad range of antecedents which trigger those emotions. These have been related to whether or not recipients are ready for change (Holt et al, 2007), are committed to the change (Jaros, 2010), their perceptions of the future (Keifer, 2005), organisational culture (Raschid, 2004; Smollans & Sayers, 2009), the context in which the change is taking place (Glaever, 2009; Smollan, 2006), concerns about job security (Oreg, 2006; Paulsen et al, 2005), perceived favourability of outcomes (Holt, Armenakis, Feild & Harris, 2007), the extent of change (Caldwell, Herold & Fedor, 2004), a clash with other loyalties or strongly held beliefs (Beyer, 1981), loss of trust (Kiefer, 2005; Oreg, 2006; Sloyan, 2009), lack of participation or involvement (Amiot, Blanchard & Gaudreau, 2006; Holt et al, 2007) and concern about fairness or perceived justice (Smollan & Mathney, 2003). Past experience can also influence current emotional reactions to change. Fredrickson (2000) contends that an individual's past and ongoing affective experiences guide their decisions about the future. Her

research concludes that people evaluate situations and make decisions about the future based on certain types of past episodes particularly those which have included peaks and troughs. Thus, if an individual has previously been involved in a significant reform their lasting memories of that reform will affect their reactions to current change events.

Conventional wisdom would suggest that certain people are predisposed to be positive or negative towards change (Smollan, 2009). Research by Vakola et al (2004) indicates that disposition along with emotional intelligence can indeed be a key factor in an individual's reaction to change. Their research supports a significant relationship between the 'big five' dimensions of personality (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness), emotional intelligence and attitudes to change. Their findings confirm the relationships between these variables indicating that there is a need to adopt an individual level approach to the management of change.

2.5.4 Other factors influencing responses to change

The nature of the change process and how it is managed are also factors which mediate responses to change (Amiot et al, 2008; Glaever & Helleso, 2010). In their study of one of the caring professions (nursing), Glaever and Helleso (2010) identify a predominance of negative emotions in response to a major reform. These include anger, rage, guilt, resignation and feeling overwhelmed. However, these negative emotions do not reflect an unwillingness or resistance to change, rather they are the result of specific negative experiences in relation to the ways in which change was planned and managed and the ways in which the change impacted on the quality of work and the identity of the nurses involved. Respondents reported that there were a lot of unanswered questions to which change managers did not seem to have answers, that changes were implemented too quickly, that they were not properly informed before changes were made and that they were offered insufficient training. They were also concerned that struggling to adapt to the new systems had a negative impact on the quality of hands-on care with their patients at the same time as they had to make extra effort to compensate for

this. In addition they experienced uncertainty about the potential benefits that would result from the change. Similar factors related to the change process are identified by Smoolan, Sayers and Matheney (2010) with regard to the speed, frequency and timing of change.

2.5.5 The complexities of emotion and change

As Piderit (ibid) notes responses to change which are neither consistently negative nor consistently positive are the most prevalent type of initial response to change (p 783). Oreg and Sverdlik (2011) concur that employees' reactions to change may be considerably more complex than has hitherto been considered and that failure to take account of ambivalent reactions where individuals may hold strong yet conflicting views can lead to misinterpretation with individuals being seen as indifferent or resistant. They also suggest that reactions to imposed change which result in ambivalent feelings may be the result of the imposition not necessarily the change itself because when both instability (caused by the change) and compliance (what the change managers seek of employees) are elicited most individuals will experience some kind of internal conflict. Mixed emotional responses which result in ambivalence to change represent one layer of complexity. The stage models of change described above (Liu & Perrewe, 2005) suggest that there are simple divisions between emotional responses, those which are negative and those which are positive, and do not consider the notion that multiple emotions may exist at the same time (Elfenbein, 2007; Klarner, Todnem & Diefenbach, 2011). Furthermore, as Klarner et al also point out most studies to date neglect the fact that emotions evolve during a change process and that different events can trigger different reactions at different times. Lastly, studies on employee emotions and the resulting coping behaviours focus on a single organisational change and do not take account of emotions experienced in prior changes or in the personal life of the change recipient which may trigger current emotional responses.

While the discussion on emotion and organisational change has been no more than a brief foray into a vast collection of literature based on empirical research and theory it serves to bolster the argument that emotional

reactions to change are complex and multi-faceted regardless of context. Not only are the range of emotions experienced by individuals many and varied but narratives of change and emotion are also multi-authored, multiple emotions can be experienced at the same time, different emotions can be experienced at different times and those emotions themselves may be triggered as a result of previously experienced emotions during prior changes in a person's life. In short, individual responses and emotions as a result of change are highly complex on any number of different levels.

2.6 Conclusion

The central purpose of this research project has been to develop an understanding of teachers' emotional responses to a centrally imposed and increasingly frequent 'fix' in schools which are not reaching the required standard. Two key fields were identified for this literature review with a third introduced to locate the discussion on teacher emotions and change within the wider context of emotional responses to organisational change. Exploration of the literature on the wider educational, political and historical context captured a diverse and often conflicting range of philosophical, political and educational perspectives on what have been, and remain, significant issues in education. The discussion on marketisation and the resulting climate in which teachers live and work demonstrates the extent and the impact of external influences on all schools and teachers in England notwithstanding a change as significant as the one under study in this research. The exploration of research on the consequences of this environment on teachers' emotions when they already engage in emotional labour as part of their commitment to learners highlights the impact of the scrutiny to which they are subjected on an ongoing basis and which has become part and parcel of their existence. The brief review of emotions and organisational change further emphasises the multiple layers of complexity faced by individuals regardless of context when faced with significant change.

While an extensive review of literature might be expected to support the refinement of research questions the layers of complexity revealed in this chapter only served to reinforce my intention to maintain a broad

perspective as I began to engage with participants. Narrowing the research objectives into more specific questions may have resulted in the exclusion of key data which might provide greater insight into their experience of the change and their perceptions of the outcomes. I did not want to predetermine any particular research path despite the complex picture which would inevitably emerge by encouraging participants to tell their own story in the way that supported their sense-making of the change in which they had been involved. In the next chapter (Chapter 3) I outline how this was approached.

Goodson (2001) proposes that there are three segments of the educational change process: the external (in this case a significant government reform), the internal (how this is mediated by individual schools) and the personal (how this is experienced by teachers). Traditional change theory based on rationality largely ignores or attempts to manage an individual's relationship to change (the personal) and yet genuine change most often results from a transformation in personal perceptions and beliefs (ibid). It is over a decade since Goodson suggested that following the domination of external interests in the preceding two decades (i.e. government reforms) that personal agency was beginning to gather force. While this is certainly reflected in the call for research into teachers' experience of change voiced in this chapter there has been scant evidence of a rebalancing of the three segments of the change process in our schools. This research hopes to play a small part in demonstrating the need for a greater balancing of the segments and of taking teachers' reactions into account when school leaders are planning or implementing change.

Chapter 3: Research design

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research has been to gain insight into how teachers experience change and to understand their perceptions of the outcomes of that change. Understanding teachers' stories and the meaning they create from their experience has been central to this and has guided the choices made in crafting the research design. In this chapter I describe the path that was taken to arrive at my research design and how the data was gathered and analysed. The chapter starts with an identification of the underlying epistemology (3.2) and the adoption of an interpretive stance. It then explains how and why I became a 'bricoleuse' (3.3). I then discuss the concept of narrative authority and narrative inquiry (3.4). This discussion is followed by a consideration of my chosen research strategy (3.5) and how I defined (3.6) and entered the field (3.7). This section explains how the participants were chosen and the approach taken to the individual interviews. In the following section (3.8) I outline my reasons for applying two distinct methods of data analysis one which was designed to focus on the individual voices of the participants, the other to achieve the rigour required to facilitate cross case analysis and generate themes, concepts or patterns across all of the stories told. The ensuing sections discuss the critical role of reflexivity in the context of this research (3.9) and the steps which were taken to maximise its trustworthiness (3.10). I then consider the ethical issues involved in the research (3.11). The chapter concludes by outlining the specific stages and steps undertaken within the data analysis (3.12).

3.2 Choosing an epistemological framework

As I have demonstrated in Chapter Two there is now a ground swell of literature investigating and calling for further research into teacher emotions particularly in relation to their experience of change. Given that this seeks to understand personal responses in specific contexts it is perhaps of little surprise that most of it relies

on qualitative research methodology or the interpretive paradigm. Providing a precise definition of qualitative research is no mean feat (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p2) with authors choosing to define it according to their personal ontological framework. Given the nature of my research objectives I have been particularly drawn to definitions provided by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Beck (cited in Radnor, 2001). Denzin and Lincoln define qualitative research as: *'an attempt to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them'* (p 3). This definition not only roots research in the *'subjective nature of individual realities'* (Bryant & Cox, 2004) as change recipients seek to make meaning from their experiences, but it also recognises that any research can represent no more than an attempt to interpret phenomena, that it will always be subject to limitations and that only partial truths can be uncovered.

Beck argues that:

'(t)he purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see it and to demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality' (Beck cited in Radnor, 2001, p20).

This complements Boje's (1995) view that organisational experiences should be recognised through multiple stories and that each story will be articulated in a *'different language'* (Czarniawska, 1997). Beck's definition expands on that of Denzin and Lincoln by drawing attention to the end result of meaning making and its role in determining whether, and how, change is implemented. The literature on emotions and organisational change clearly demonstrates that individuals commonly respond differently to the same change events (Bryant, 2006; Carnall, 1986; Reio, 2005; Taylor, 1999). It was logical, therefore, to assume that each of the participants in my research sample would also react differently to the change process depending on their interpretation of events and their own personal context. The choice of a research methodology which would actively embrace this diversity was critical to recognising and developing an understanding of these differences as well as to identifying any commonalities.

In seeking to identify my own path as a novice researcher I have come to understand that the choice of research methodology relies at least to a certain degree on personal preference and perspective (de Weerd-Nederhof, 2001) as well as on appropriateness for the task. Given that my primary aim has been to develop a holistic understanding of an experience from a perspective other than my own, personal interaction with each of the participants was an important element of data gathering. Furthermore, not wishing to approach the study with predetermined theories based either on my previous experience of working on this or other Academy projects or on my reading of other research my preference was for an inductive approach to data analysis drawing on the stories of my participants as they experienced the change rather than interpreting their responses in relation to a hypothesis, theory or predefined propositions. It was for this reason that I chose not to develop a series of interview questions but encouraged a self directed approach from participants even though this would inevitably result in a more complex, albeit richer, set of data. Given my personal background, previous engagement in this Academy project as well as others and extensive reading of the literature on individuals' experience of change I could have posited a number of theories. However, I was always aware of the different layers of meaning making that were likely to emerge from the stories that teachers told about their experience and preferred the complexity and richness of this landscape despite the challenges involved.

3.3 Becoming a *bricoleuse*

Faced with the various ways in which I could approach my research it was hard to tell whether I was facing Morgan's '*smorgasbord*' (1983) or Ball's (2002) '*combination of Star Trek and Mission Impossible*'. With no immediately apparent template for my research design most initial thinking and reading centred on developing an understanding of qualitative approaches and their application. In reaching the conclusion that I could, and should, choose elements of different approaches from different research techniques I found Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) concept of the qualitative researcher as '*bricoleur*' or '*quilt maker*' both reassuring and supportive. The idea that the 'solution' (bricolage) could be an 'emergent construction' that evolves as new

tools or research methods are used offered me the authority to forge my own research path. Most significant, perhaps, is the view expressed by Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg (1992) who describe the method of bricolage as a choice that is '*pragmatic, strategic and self reflexive*'. In other words the researcher/bricoleuse uses the materials at hand and draws together or constructs new tools as required. This has indeed been my experience in developing an appropriate research design.

While the selection of anything other than a qualitative approach would have suited neither my purpose nor my personal predilection I was also mindful of the horizon or prejudices that I would be bringing to this study (Gadamer cited in Whitehead, 2004): that is '*the historically and culturally produced understandings that influence and, thereby constitute understanding*'(p 513). Recognising that no researcher can eliminate their experience I have been careful to ensure that my work is characterised by a highly reflexive approach. The concept of reflexivity has been central to every aspect: the identification of research questions, the choice of participants and how to secure their participation, securing approval from the sponsor and the principal, ethical considerations, re-entering the field as a researcher rather than as an education advisor, engaging with participants, analysing and interpreting data and crafting the final narrative. This has been particularly important in the light of Buchanan and Dawson's (2007) observations regarding the role of the researcher and her influence in creating a narrative. As Peshkin (1998) argues, researchers need to attend to their subjectivity in a meaningful way as it impacts on every aspect of the research process. Despite the dominant view that scientific knowledge is more objective, all researchers whether working within the quantitative or qualitative traditions or a mixture of both inevitably 'see' things from their own particular stance. For Peshkin this can be a virtuous asset but it is also one that must be actively surfaced at every stage of the research process through '*a formal, systematic monitoring of self*'. Freshwater and Avis (2005) draw a distinction between a practitioner's notion of critical reflection and that of a researcher. They contend that while practitioners use it as a means to explicate their personal theories, qualitative researchers critically reflect on their practice as an instrument for generating evidence. As a novice researcher it was particularly important for me to develop

my skills in reflexivity in order to develop and maintain what Clandinin and Connelley (2000) refer to as 'wakefulness', a quality that is essential within narrative inquiry. Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2006) outline that one of the key principles of naturalistic research is that the researcher, herself, is the key instrument of research. While researcher objectivity can be called into question in both research traditions, in the context of qualitative research the potential for subjectivity to impact on the trustworthiness of credibility of the findings becomes more critical. It was therefore essential that I openly question my own bias and its source. I outline the ways in which I sought to do this later in the chapter.

3.4 Narrative authority and narrative inquiry

While narratology as a qualitative research strategy has a long tradition in fields such as the humanities it is a relative newcomer within education (Clandinin and Connelly, 2006) although Schultz et al (1997) record its use as early as 1996. It is worth noting that to date most studies in the field of education which employ narrative inquiry have been in the context of teacher education or training (e.g. Clandinin and Connelley 2000; Conle, 1999, 2000) or cross-cultural development (e.g. Fand He, 2002; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Phillion, 2008; Tsui, 2007; Xu & Connelly, 2008;) whereas this research is located in the less frequented territory of a specific reform (e.g. Craig, 2003).

Story telling has a long and healthy tradition which has no doubt survived because stories are compelling (Ospina & Dodge, 2005) and because narrative, whether verbal or written, allows individuals to construct and reconstruct the world in which they live, enabling them to find meaning in their experience (Day, 2002). As Bell (2002) suggests:

Narrative inquiry rests on the epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures. That is, we select those elements of experience to which we will attend, and we will pattern those chosen elements in ways that reflect the stories available to us. (p207)

However, the simple formulation or retelling of stories does not constitute research. So where does narrative authority reside and how does the interpretation of these stories reveal meaning or meanings which can illuminate a situation, personal behaviour or a change effort? Olsen (1995) offers us an answer to this question. Her concept of narrative authority is based on Dewey's understanding of personal experience as continuous and interactive. In other words, we are isolated in our unique experience and yet at the same time share our world and interact with others within it. How we make sense of the world depends on both. Olsen (1995) suggests that there are two fundamental ways in which we each attempt to understand the world. The first is based on the construction of theories and the second on the construction of stories, referred to respectively as paradigmatic and narrative modes of knowing (Bruner cited in Olsen, 2004). An understanding of the division between these two modes of knowing is fundamental to the reading of this thesis in that one mode of knowing informs, sustains and is sustained by the performative culture outlined in the first section of my literature review, a culture in which the concept of Academies was born, while the other recognises the critical importance of an individual perspective.

The paradigmatic mode of knowing *'deals in general causes (and) ...makes use of procedures to assure verifiable reference ..., to test for empirical truth'* (Bruner cited in Olsen, p 121) and to develop abstract theories or propositions. This way of understanding the world is based on the belief that there is an underlying essential and absolute 'truth' that exists regardless of what an individual believes to be true. The search for this absolute truth requires us to disregard personal experience and trust in the certainty of cognitive reasoning. *'This version of knowledge provides a pervasive hegemony as the legitimate authority of technical rationalism'* (Olsen, ibid, p 121). It is a version of knowledge which dominates our society and our education system and is enshrined in traditional change management theory and our performative culture.

The narrative way of knowing, in contrast, recognises that there are varying perspectives on the world but that there is no one absolute truth. This version of knowledge also recognises that our personal practical knowledge changes shape and form as we interact with others and over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). It does not separate the knower from the known and accepts that we are the authoritative source of our experience and since everyone is a knower who deserves to be heard, all voices become authoritative sources. Dhunpath (2000) goes so far as to claim that listening to the individual voices of others may be the only authentic means of understanding how motives and practices reflect the interface between institutional and individual experience while Frost (2009) suggests that it is:

‘particularly at times of incoherence in events and breaches in the individual’s sense of identity that the stories are useful in making sense of changes in the sense of self and the individuals’ relationship with their surroundings’ (p 9).

This view is supported by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) who argue that storytelling is the organising principle in educators’ lives. Hence, stories contain knowledge which differs from that gained from surveys or other methods of data collection that do not explicitly seek narrative content (Ospina & Dodge, 2005). They also provide a unique window into the specific experiences of individual actors undergoing dramatic change.

The intention in developing narrative approaches, therefore, is to experience and interpret the world rather than attempt to explain or rationalise it. The research intention is to support individuals in finding meaning in their stories and to illuminate issues which may support change and development in the particular context in which the research is undertaken and at the same time raise issues for further reflection or study within the wider education community. In their studies Noddings (1996) and Nias (1996) emphasise the importance of teachers’ stories especially those which portray feeling. Nias further suggests that teachers can grow personally and professionally as a result of sharing and developing their stories through interaction with a researcher. The nature of the relationship which develops between the researcher and the participant, while always critical in qualitative research, becomes of even greater importance in light of this.

Connelley and Clandinin (1996) draw a distinction between 'stories of teachers' which are stories given to teachers by others and 'teachers' stories' which are the stories that teachers tell about themselves. They also suggest that schools have narratives which are given to them or alternatively told about them. Craig (2003) suggests two further categories – 'stories of reform' and 'reform stories' where the latter are stories that educators live and tell about their experience of reform. The concepts of both teachers' stories and reform stories are central to this research which is designed to find meaning and create a narrative from the stories developed by teachers about their personal experience of a major reform. This is perhaps best summarised by Clandinin and Connelly (2006):

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way narrative inquiry is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study.
(p477)

Narrative inquiry is not solely a means of exploring a phenomenon. It is also the phenomenon itself. As Richardson cited in Keats, 2009, p 181) says, '*narratives are able to act both as a means of knowing and a method of telling*'. Thus, like Connelly and Clandinin (1990) I take the view that '*people by nature lead storied lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of the experience*'. (p2)

In undertaking narrative inquiry as a methodology I did not underestimate the complexities. Not only is narrative research a contested field (Squires, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008) but narrative inquiry requires what Clandinin and Connelly (2006) call '*particular kinds of wakefulness*'. While the former necessitates meticulous attention to methodological detail, the latter requires an even greater attention to the development of appropriate interview technique and the development of finely honed listening skills and personal reflection on the part of the researcher. Conle (2005) states that we rarely know our own consciousness well enough to tell everything. However, the act of narrating a story means authorship and leads to an authorisation of an inner story that is beneficial to the teller. This is as pertinent for the researcher as it is for those being invited to tell their own stories. In adopting narrative inquiry as a methodology a researcher therefore assumes a particular responsibility as he or she is invited to share in the creation of previously untold stories or alternatively stories which have not previously been conceived in a formal way.

It is reassuring to note that other researchers, some considerably more experienced than me, have trodden the same path of uncertainty as they engage with aspects of this methodology (e.g. Phillion, 2008). I have taken note of cautionary advice offered and in the section which follows address the measures which have been taken to maximise the trustworthiness or credibility of my research.

Choosing narrative inquiry as my research methodology was informed by a number of considerations. Firstly, I was acutely aware of my own change 'story' and the impact that this had had on the ways in which I now see and understand change. Secondly, as a change agent actively involved in the strategic management of change I was keen not to lose sight of the ways in which this impacts on those individuals on the 'receiving end'. Furthermore, following the discipline involved in undertaking narrative inquiry (e.g. being wakeful), I felt would ensure that I did not stray from the 'narrative mode of knowing' into the 'paradigmatic mode of knowing' which determines the ways in which I have to do my day job. I have at all times been conscious of the tension between these two ways of knowing. Day's (2002) reflections on the use of narrative inquiry as a research tool

are worthy of particular note in this context. He suggests that although reformers wedded to managerialism and performativity have come to recognise the existence of teacher stress and its impact on teaching, learning and standards they have not as yet taken any steps to look beyond the 'crisis' to respond to the emotional dimension of teaching (p 407). I was determined that in my research I would take a small step in this direction and take full account of how individual teachers made sense of the imposed change that they experienced. Not only did I wish to contribute to new knowledge in this field I was also keen to expand my own professional understanding of the impact of change on individuals to enhance any future work that I might undertake in this area.

Before progressing to a discussion of my research strategy it is important to explore a little further how my own change story has impacted on my approach to this research and the concept of narrative authority. Grappling with the challenges of leadership, professional catastrophe and then a new direction in my career resulted in a particular sensitivity to the emotionality of change particularly when it is externally mandated. While I embrace the demands of chosen change this is counterbalanced by a familiarity with the intense and often conflicting emotions resulting from the imposition of unanticipated change. This heightened awareness enabled me to understand and empathise with the complexity and intensity of the participants' experience. At the same time it enabled me to maintain the professional distance required to position myself as a researcher. If, as Clandinin and Connelly (ibid) suggest, narrative inquiry is a way of thinking about experience and if the research intention is to support individuals in finding meaning through their stories, an understanding of the nature of the experience without the specific emotional attachment provides a particular insight within the interpretive paradigm.

3.5 Research strategy

My research strategy is based on Clandinin and Connelly's approach to narrative inquiry (2006). First and foremost I have had to learn to think like a narrative inquirer. In the course of researching my methodology and

developing the research design I have come to understand that the principles of narrative inquiry must apply as much to myself as the researcher as they do to my co-researchers who are participants in the process. Consequently like Kelly (Kelly & Howie, 2007) I decided to 'write my story' first and use it as a text to re-examine my research objectives and my own perspective on change in general and imposed change in particular. Crafting my own story as a prelude to interviewing the participants encouraged me to reflect on major change events in my life and made me confront my own 'horizon' (Whitehead, 2004) and the prejudices that I would bring to the research process. It reminded me that unlike some teachers I thrive on change and actively seek it in my professional life. It also served to remind me of the particular circumstances in which I had previously engaged with the change process in this Academy and consequently my direct or indirect involvement with each of the participants. My role as a change agent resulted in a distinctly different perspective on the process of change. I was an outsider and an agent of the policymakers who wished to effect the imposed change in this context. As such I represented the 'performative culture' and the paradigmatic mode of knowing.

Standing as I did on the 'other side of the fence' this attention to my own horizon (Whitehead, 2004) was essential. It made me actively surface ideas and thoughts which would influence my interpretation of the teachers' stories. As a result I gave serious attention to my role as researcher before, during and after the interview process. It was critical not only that I entered the field as a researcher fully '*wakeful*' and aware of my own feelings and experiences but also that I explicitly sought ways of *being* a researcher in the eyes of my participants and remaining a researcher as I began to analyse the data and craft a narrative from the findings. '*Bracketing my own interests*' (Kelly & Howie, 2007, p138) in this way enabled me to be more aware of the need to recognise them when listening to and hearing the stories of my participants and to maintain a reflexive stance during the interviews and the analytical stages of the process. This awareness led to me choosing elements of the voice-centred relational method as the first stage of data analysis.

3.6 Defining the field

In thinking about narrative inquiry Clandinin and Connelly (2006) describe a three dimensional space characterised by three commonplaces: temporality, sociality and place. They contend that the three dimensional space created by these three commonplaces defines each narrative although there is a different balance between the three in each story that is told. They argue that every story is defined in terms of its place in time whether this is past, present or future and sometimes two or all of these. A person's history and their prior experience influence their perceptions and how they see what has happened, is happening and also what may happen. Their personal and social conditions, the nature of the surrounding environment and the people within it (sociality) similarly contribute to the way they tell or see their story. Lastly the particular place in which they work or worked, or in which their story unfolds also contributes to the nature of the story itself. This concept of the three commonplaces was important in formulating the approach that was made to participants and the way in which the interviews were conducted.

Each participant inevitably brought their personal history to the story that they told including their past, what had happened to them through the process of change and where they believed their future lay whether in or out of the particular context. The timing of the interviews also affected the commonplace of temporality. The interviews were conducted six months after the Academy opened. This meant that participants had had a period of time to reflect on what had happened not only during the major upheaval of becoming an Academy but in the period after it had been established. Interviewing them in September, immediately after it opened or in the following September after twelve months would have resulted in a changed perspective, however slight, depending on any intervening experiences.

Each participant was both part of the whole story and had their own story to tell based on who they were, what age group of pupils they had worked with previously, the staff group that they came from and how different members of that staff group reacted to the change. Given that more than one predecessor school was

involved, participants had lived and worked within different school cultures or at the very least had experienced that culture in a different way. This is without taking into account any other aspects of the commonplace of sociality.

Lastly participants had previously worked in various physical environments, different buildings, and different classrooms and with different resources and routines each of which affected the story that they would tell. Each participant thus not only contributed their own teacher story but also made a contribution to the wider reform story.

3.7 Selecting the interviewees and entering the field

The intent of this research was to explore how teachers of different ages and from different contexts experienced the same major change event. Given that becoming an Academy involved, in this case, the amalgamation of more than one predecessor school it was possible to select teachers from different contexts who were likely to have experienced, and therefore made sense of, the change in different ways (Taylor, 1999). I approached twelve teachers in the first instance who had taught across both the primary and secondary phases. Eleven of the teachers agreed to take part in the research. The twelfth teacher agreed but later expressed some concerns and dropped out. She was replaced by another teacher from the same age range. I was keen to ensure an appropriate balance of gender and age. While it was not possible to achieve a perfect balance across the different age ranges I did manage to achieve a reasonable spread of age and gender across the whole sample with five male and seven female teachers and seven teachers in the 20-40 age bracket and five in the 40-60 age bracket. The sample was clearly purposive in nature and no claims are made that it represents the wider population of teachers either within this particular Academy or in other Academies.

While I had not met all of these teachers on a one to one basis prior to the selection and interview process they all knew who I was and what my role had been prior to, and after, the opening of the Academy. I had

previously spoken directly to six of them to inform them of their new roles and classes once the Academy opened.

It was my intention to conduct in depth interviews of between 45 minutes and one hour with each of the teachers who agreed to take part. In practice the interviews varied in length with some lasting up to 80 minutes and one lasting no more than 30. While I was not conducting a biographical interview I did nevertheless base the interview strategy on the approach adopted by Stroobants (2005) allowing each teacher to self direct their story as much as possible freeing each participant to '*determine the content, rhythm and structure of the story he or she wanted to tell*' (p52). My intent, like Taylor (ibid) was to encourage them to articulate their sense-making of what was most salient to them about the change with as little influence from me as possible (p 529). I constructed a brief introduction to each interview designed to put the respondents at ease as quickly as possible and to ensure consistency of approach and then invited them to tell me their story. I endeavoured to intervene in the telling of the narrative as little as possible, restricting my role to offering encouragement to continue or prompts designed to reinforce the story being told rather than engaging in dialogue any more than was necessary, although this was not always possible. Participants were encouraged to say as much as possible about events, their feelings and personal experience during the process of becoming an Academy and in the six months since it opened. In the event, given that they knew of my previous involvement, some of them sought to engage me in conversation about my role and my relationship with the current principal at various points. I responded to this as briefly and courteously as I could and encouraged them to return to their narrative, sometimes using prompt questions to do so.

Before agreeing to take part each teacher was sent an information sheet (Appendix A) describing the study and before each interview they were asked to complete and sign the consent form (Appendix B). All informants were told that the audio recordings would be used for no other purpose than for this research and that they would be destroyed upon completion of the thesis. All interviews were audio recorded and informants were

asked to check the transcripts as soon as possible once they were complete. Contrary to my expectations once teachers had told their stories they were reluctant to engage further in the research process. One or two clarified some points from the transcripts and offered further comments in email correspondence whereas others simply acknowledged receipt of the transcript. This limited response clearly had an impact on my ability to improve the trustworthiness of my findings through participant validation. At the same time I was not particularly surprised by this response particularly from participants who had been troubled by the experience of change. It was as if the telling of their story had acted as a cathartic experience. Once told, the teachers wanted to move on and were reluctant to engage in any further 'discussion' about what had happened.

Given that all of the participants had encountered me in either or both of my professional roles within the Academy I was particularly conscious of the need to establish a different type of relationship with them within the research context. It was thus particularly important that I establish an 'I-Thou' relationship (Schultz cited in Seidman, 2006, pp 95) establishing a rapport with each individual but maintaining sufficient distance to allow the participant to fashion his/her responses as independently as possible. The choice of the Stroobant's method (ibid) represented a conscious attempt to support this relationship.

3.8 Choosing the data analysis tools

Until the end of the 20th Century, with the exception of one or two seminal texts on the issue (e.g. Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1984, 1994) analysis within the qualitative research paradigm was a relatively neglected subject (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Equally there was, and is, a significant emphasis on the need to make visible the means by which data are analysed and interpreted to ensure that other researchers can follow in the same path and understand the source of interpretations and hence improve the plausibility, credibility or trustworthiness of any findings (Hopkins, 1987; Whitehead, 2004). While there may now be more written on the analysis of qualitative data finding both the most appropriate and suitably rigorous means of analysis has nevertheless proved to be a demanding task.

The choice of a narrative approach to my research led to an initial exploration of narrative analysis as a means of analysing data. However, the need to focus intensively on individual accounts and the ways in which they had been constructed by the storyteller did not easily facilitate the cross case analysis which was required to understand the ways in which teachers from different organisations and different phases of education experienced the change. Equally, I was keen to immerse myself, at least initially, in each of the individual narratives to get a sense of the individual and how their personal history, circumstances and disposition may have influenced the development of their story. A thematic analysis approach in which both the content and the context of the stories were subject to analysis seemed more appropriate given that my sample was drawn from both the primary and secondary phases of the education system and from more than one predecessor school. Reassured by Denzin and Lincoln's concept of the '*bricoleur*' as well as by Coffey and Atkinson's (1996) view that a researcher should choose those approaches which best suit her predilections and the research purpose I determined to use a combination of approaches to interrogate my data.

In reviewing the various means of analysing data I was drawn to the feminist literature on data analysis, in particular the voice-centred relational method as espoused by Mauthner and Doucet (1998). I felt that this would be ideally suited to support complete immersion in the data which would be generated by participants and ensure that I 'heard' each storyteller's voice independently of those of other participants before moving to an in depth cross case analysis and the identification of key concepts, dimensions and patterns which would constitute the narrative of the reform story. This method originally developed by Brown and Gilligan (1992) has its roots in clinical and literary approaches as well as interpretive and hermeneutical traditions and relational theory. It was particularly attractive as it seemed to offer a means of keeping alive the perspective and voices of the storytellers at the same time as developing the new perspective offered by the researcher.

The method involves a number of readings of the text, only two of which I determined would be relevant in helping me to achieve my objective. The other two readings (a) reading for relationships and b) placing people within cultural contexts and structures) were of less value in the context of stories about organisational change rather than personal development. The first reading has two reader response elements: first, identification of the key elements of the plot within the story being told and second, locating the researcher within the story by identifying how her experiences and background influence her emotional and intellectual responses to the storyteller. The former provided an important insight into those particular issues which preoccupied individuals as they reflected on the change process and how they saw themselves in relation to what happened and in relation to others involved in the process. Reading the texts in this way clearly demonstrated the importance of one of Clandinin and Connelly's commonplaces, that of sociality or context. The second reader response element was particularly useful in ensuring the high degree of reflexivity that was so important given my prior relationship with the participants and the prejudices which I had identified. It made me reflect on my reactions to the participants and what they said and to focus intensely on their story. Reading the transcripts several times as part of this first reading led to a constant reassessment of my own position vis a vis the participants and ensured that I was truly engaging with the stories that they had to tell.

The second reading identifies the voice of 'I' within the text focussing the researcher's attention on how the storyteller sees and presents him or herself within the story. This was of particular value as it again highlighted the commonplace of sociality or context. For example, reading Mona's story in this way led to a particular line of enquiry which was pursued in the second reading of other transcripts as well as in the cross case analysis. Mona's story also highlighted the commonplace of sociality and informed one the key findings outlined in Chapter 6. Literally highlighting the occasions when Mona used 'I' in her story threw into relief the number of times she also used 'we', linking her own experience of the change process to that of her colleagues. While other participants did not refer to 'we' as often (they tended to use 'they' instead) this method of reading

Mona's transcript resulted in a heightened awareness of the ways in which other participants talked about their colleagues and how their colleagues' emotions affected their own responses.

Reading the stories in this way developed a deep familiarity with the texts and stories being told. Leaving space between each reading also helped me to create the distance advocated by Schultz (ibid). Each reading resulted in a series of reflexive notes or memos as recommended by Radnor (2002) which suggested individual lines of enquiry and contributed to an understanding of how each individual story might contribute to the reform story. These memos formed the basis of the case records in Chapter 4. While this approach developed familiarity with the data and supported a reflexive approach it did not provide the rigour that I sought to analyse the data set to identify common themes and patterns or to develop explanatory accounts for the findings which emerged.

While there are numerous text books on entering the field and interview techniques (e.g. Brenner, 1985; Seidman, 2006) I found relatively few texts that provided a clearly defined framework for the data analysis I was keen to undertake. While responsive to the view expressed by Coffey and Atkinson (1996) that it is entirely appropriate to choose those elements of a data analysis strategy fit for purpose and inclination, as a novice researcher I remained keen to identify a structure which would provide me with a recognised framework for approaching what was a particularly daunting task. I found the answer in a guide for Social Science Students and Researchers edited by Ritchie and Lewis (2003). Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor (2003) outline a step by step approach to data analysis in qualitative research called Framework, which supported a rigorous and in depth approach to analysing my data. It also provided what I perceived to be a common sense approach to the identification of substantive meanings in the data. Ritchie et al outline an analytical hierarchy or a series of steps which built on the initial immersion in the data outlined above. My data, in common with all qualitative research data were messy, voluminous and inherently unwieldy in their raw state. Framework provided me

with an effective means of data reduction and a structured means of moving from initial concepts to the identification of associative patterns and thence to explanations and applications to wider theory.

The principles and processes underpinning Framework as a means of analysis actively supported a developing understanding and interpretation of the substantive meaning within the stories that participants shared. The tool enabled me to remain grounded in the data and provided a structure which allowed emergent ideas, concepts and patterns to be captured and easily revisited. This was particularly important given the different emphasis each teacher placed on various elements of the change process. It supported a step by step synthesis and reduction of the rich data I had gathered through interviews without losing the original terms, thoughts and perspective of the teachers. It provided me with a means to order and display the evidence without resorting to computer assisted packages allowing me to keep myself firmly rooted in the data through a manual process of analysis. The structure facilitated cross case analysis and supported the identification of themes and associations both within and across different stories. In short, it was a tool which suited my need to manage the data by hand, immerse myself fully in the data and ensure that I developed a systematic and comprehensive coverage of the data set.

3.9 Reflexivity

Much is written on the subject of reflexivity in relation to the qualitative research paradigm although it could be argued that it is equally important within the quantitative tradition. It is of particular importance in the context of this research for two further reasons. Firstly, participants were themselves being asked to be reflective, to look back on a major change event which had impacted on their lives as individuals and teachers. For some this would inevitably result in reliving a highly emotional experience. Secondly, the researcher herself needed to be more 'wakeful' than is perhaps usual given that I had been part of the team who had brought about the change event and was therefore closely associated with it. While only a few participants made direct reference to this there is no doubt that this will have influenced the telling of their story in some way. I ensured

that this was identified as one of the concepts to be explored in analysing the data through the thematic charts.

This attention to reflexivity made me actively confront my own prejudices and horizon (Whitehead, 2004). I became aware, for example, that I had adopted a particular stance towards Roger on the first reading of his story. At a superficial level Roger's story is dominated by the issue of pupil behaviour. He seemed to be primarily concerned with sanctions and the impact of poor behaviour on teachers rather than its consequences in terms of achievement and learning. This impression was gained from the first and second readings using the voice-centred relational method. However, once I began to develop the thematic charts my perspective on Roger and his preoccupation changed. Further reading and analysis created a greater distance between my prejudices and what Roger was actually saying in his story. Rather than being negative it became clear that Roger was actually very pragmatic. He had looked out for himself during the change process but he had also actively engaged in his new role, was clearly enjoying working with new colleagues and despite his continued concerns about behaviour he was giving the new organisation a chance.

Given that stories are told from a particular point of view for a particular audience and are therefore imbued with motive and that I continued at that time to have a role within the Academy, a high degree of reflexivity was required at each stage of the research process: before commencing the interviews, during the interviews, during data analysis and in developing explanations and theories. While my previous and current roles could be construed as potentially having a negative impact on the storytelling of my participants it could equally have enabled them to raise and discuss things knowing that the interviewer understood the context in some detail. Indeed, Syrjala, Takala and Sintonen (2009) contend that the presence in their research team of a member of the 'inner circle' was in fact an advantage as he had access to insider events that another researcher would have been barred from and that the research benefited from his profound familiarity with the field of study giving it a genuinely grassroots perspective (p266). There are clearly elements of an ethnographic approach

within the research as I had been part of the change process and therefore understood it in a different way to a researcher with no previous experience or knowledge of the event. This applied equally to my interpretation of the data which has inevitably been influenced by immersion in the situation albeit from a different perspective.

Given that my own background is in the field of education I have inevitably been influenced by informal, personal and tacit theory about education and schools as well as my own personal horizon and prejudices (Whitehead, 2004). Radnor argues that when this is recognised it positively enhances the process of engaging in interpretive research. Being a reflexive researcher is equally critical in the presentation of the data and development of explanatory accounts and theories. As Hammersley (1998: p47) notes '*the naturalistic mode of writing tends to present descriptions as if they simply reproduced the phenomena described*' and yet this is clearly not the case. It is the researcher herself who creates new meaning from the stories being told and presents this in a new narrative form crafted from her personal interpretation of the data.

So what does it mean to be a reflexive researcher? As Etherington (2004) suggests this thesis has come to represent my own journey as I travelled alongside the participants in this research. My story is reflected in their stories and theirs in mine. While this does not offer a detailed explanation of my understanding of what it means to be a reflexive researcher it does capture the essence in that '*new selves form within us as we tell and re-tell our stories and as we write them down*' (Etherington, *ibid*, p3). As a result of undertaking this research and crafting this thesis I have developed a greater understanding of my own story as well as those of the teachers from this Academy who took part. I have also consciously reconstructed my professional and academic identity and know that this is an ongoing journey which will remain incomplete.

In developing as a reflexive researcher I have not only had to learn to understand myself at a deeper level but have had to make this learning explicit. This resulted first in the telling of my own story and then in making transparent the values and beliefs that I hold as they are key to the ways in which I have analysed and

interpreted the data. I have had to be aware of my personal and professional responses to the teachers in the research and to what they are saying. I have made choices in how to analyse the data and most importantly in how to interpret what I have been told. I have also had to learn that using my professional and personal experience can be a legitimate source of knowledge as long as it is subject to close scrutiny and analysis and, where possible, peer review. The latter has been a particularly challenging journey.

To be a reflexive researcher demands a moral and ethical imperative as well as an acute awareness of the power relationships between the researcher and the researched. The importance of the relationship between the storytellers and the listener, between the knower and what is known, while always critical was of even greater importance given the nature of my role within the Academy. And yet this role also ensured that I was scrupulously attentive to being reflexive at each and every stage of the research journey. In telling my own story I not only positioned myself as a researcher I also made transparent the bias that I would bring to my interpretation of the stories of my participants both to myself and to the reader.

So what specific steps did I take on this journey? While the extensive reading required for the literature review was challenging coming as it did from two very different areas of academic writing, this deep immersion in the educational context of my research field from two different perspectives enabled me to position and reposition myself within the environment in which I work. The reading, analysis and, indeed, the crafting of the literature review reaffirmed my purpose in conducting the research as well as developing a deeper understanding and knowledge base. The reading which informed the research design was no less illuminating as it supported the development of my confidence in being a researcher and guided me in how to remain reflexive as I prepared for and conducted the research interviews. The choice of interview strategy represented another key step in the process designed as it was to not only encourage the participants to be reflexive themselves but also to maintain my reflexive approach. During the interviews I was attentive to my body language, to my choice of language, the way in which I listened, interacted and responded to each participant. Reflexive notes written

after each interview provided an additional means of searching for and surfacing my initial responses to the voices I had heard. Listening to the teachers' voices has been the key to the research strategy throughout. However I was also aware that learning to listen as a researcher is not an easy skill. The two readings as espoused by Mauthner and Doucet (1998) explicitly sought to identify and separate my emotional responses not only to the participants but to what they were saying.

While conducting research on a part time basis has had significant drawbacks it has also provided a distinct advantage as I returned to the texts and various stages of analysis on numerous occasions often after prolonged periods. This ensured that on each occasion and at every stage of the data analysis I saw the data with fresh eyes and was able to be critical in my analysis of my previous interpretations. The final step in my approach to being a reflexive researcher lay in the crafting of the narrative itself. Writing, rather than listening, reading or analysing created the need for a new appraisal of my interpretation as I struggled to articulate it formally for both myself and the reader.

3.10 Ensuring authenticity and developing trustworthy findings

While qualitative researchers may not adhere to the 'old criteria' for the evaluation of research (Demertzi , Bagakis &Georgiadou,2009, p302) nonetheless as Guba and Lincoln (2005) point out, while validity may be an irritating construct it does point to two fundamental questions that must be answered . Firstly, *'Are these findings sufficiently authentic (isomorphic to some reality, trustworthy, related to the way others construct their social worlds) that I may trust myself in acting on their implications?'* and secondly, *'would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them'* (p205).These questions crystallise the importance of validity within any research tradition. Rigour in the application of both methodology and interpretation are critical to securing high levels of validity although as Cohen, Manion and Morrisson, (2006) indicate it would be unwise to think that threats to validity and reliability can be completely erased. They venture to suggest that it should be seen as a matter of degree rather than an absolute state

contending that validity should be based on a faithful adherence to the key principles of a particular research tradition. In the case of this research the following might be considered as guiding principles which contribute to what I prefer to refer to as the trustworthiness of my findings: first, the researcher is part of the researched world and the key instrument of research; second, the data is socially situated; furthermore it is context bound; third, the data are descriptive and are analysed inductively with a view to seeking meaning and intention; fourth, a genuine attempt is made to present the data from the perspective of the participants. Finally, considerable time has been devoted to making the research process transparent to enable peer review and reflection.

Careful consideration has also been taken of Hopkins' (1987) 'eight ways' in which qualitative research can be made more valid or trustworthy, in particular, being alert to the threats to validity, being clear about analysis, calling things by their right name, knowing what you are looking for, being catholic in the use of data and finally reducing and displaying data.

Hammersley (1998) suggests that one means of assessing the trustworthiness of claims is based on whether they are plausible and credible, thus seeking confidence rather than certainty in findings. He suggests that judgements can be made as to the plausibility of claims on the basis of existing knowledge. If we find that claims are not so plausible that they can be accepted at face value the next step is to assess the credibility of the claims by scrutinising the circumstances of the research and the nature of the data collected. Where a claim is neither sufficiently plausible nor credible then evidence will be required to ascertain trustworthiness. This evidence in turn is subject to the same means of assessment, in other words it too is judged by its plausibility and credibility. While this may seem a circular approach to establishing the trustworthiness of a piece of research it is, as Hammersley also points out, how we judge the claims made in everyday life. It is precisely this need to provide plausible and credible evidence for claims that requires the qualitative

researcher to scrupulously articulate the context of the research, how it has been conducted and the different stages of analysis to establish the credibility of the conclusions which are drawn from findings.

Guba and Lincoln (2005) equate validity to authenticity and identify five hallmarks of authentic or trustworthy phenomenological inquiry. These are *fairness*, *ontological authenticity*, *educative authenticity*, *catalytic authenticity* and *tactical authenticity*. Of these the criterion of *fairness* has been of particular importance in establishing the trustworthiness of this research. *Fairness* takes account of all stakeholder views, perspectives, claims, concerns and voice, all of which are recorded and made evident by using Framework as a means of analysis. The omission of the stakeholder voice, Guba and Lincoln contend, reflects a form of bias. The rigorous application of Framework as a method of data analysis explicitly demands that each concept identified by a participant is included in the classification and categorisation of data thus ensuring that the voices of all participants are heard. I have sought to use the words of participants themselves and have placed these in context by providing mini 'case records' (Stenhouse cited in Stake, 2005) which illuminate the wider perspective of individual teachers' stories. This approach also supports negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by establishing explanations and theories which fit every case.

Given that narrative inquiry is, by its very nature, subject to a degree of bias, based as it is on the opinions, attitudes and perspectives of both the participants and the researcher, the very nature of the research design could be said to constitute a serious threat to the trustworthiness of the findings. To mitigate this, each stage of the research process has been characterised by a high degree of reflexivity. One key threat to trustworthiness, however, has been the absence of member checking of the findings to assess intentionality and to check the accuracy of the analysis undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, *ibid*). While participants acknowledged or, in some cases, provided minor clarification of particular points in their transcripts, participant validation did not extend beyond this. However, the rigour with which every other aspect of the analysis of data has been undertaken and articulated, does, I believe, mitigate this threat. It is also another reason for including the 'case

records' which follow this chapter to enable the reader to interrogate my findings by exploring the stories of the individual participants him or herself.

Whitehead (2004) perhaps best sums up the approach that I have taken to the issue of trustworthiness. She, in turn, has drawn on five key principles identified by Guba and Lincoln (1989):

The trustworthiness of a study can be endorsed if: the researcher describes and interprets their experience (credibility); readers consider that the study is transferable to another context and are able to follow the decision trail of the researcher throughout the study (dependability), finding no ambiguity about choices made; and the researcher shows how interpretations have been arrived at during the inquiry (confirmability). Findings should be informed by attention to praxis and reflexivity, understanding how one's experiences and background affect what one understands and how one acts in the world, including during inquiry. (p513)

Throughout this chapter I have attempted to describe my own experience and the process of interpretation during this research. The example I cite above involving my reappraisal of Roger and his story is just one example of an iterative process of reflection undertaken at each stage of analysis including during the process of crafting the narrative for the final two chapters. The use of Framework as a tool for data analysis resulted from a conscious decision to ensure that my findings were dependable and were inducted from the data. This provides a clear evidence trail which demonstrates how interpretations were arrived at. There were times during the process where I, as the researcher, questioned whether this evidence trail was sufficiently unambiguous and in some cases tentative findings have been discarded as a result. Perhaps more than any other aspect of trustworthiness identified by Whitehead I have been meticulous in my attention to reflexivity. Given my horizon or prejudices I was perhaps more acutely aware of the need to be reflexive than would have been the case had I not been a change agent in the same context.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The in-depth, unstructured nature of qualitative research and the fact that it raises unanticipated issues means that ethical issues have a particular resonance in studies such as this (Lewis, 2003). Lewis suggests that there are four main considerations which require reflection before, during and after the interview process. These are the need to obtain informed consent, the question of anonymity and confidentiality, protecting participants from harm and also protecting the researcher from harm. Of highest concern in this research have been the issues of consent and confidentiality. Informed consent operated at a number of levels. First and foremost I required the consent of the sponsor and the principal to enter the field. Given the highly sensitive and political nature of the change in question I was fortunate to obtain this consent. The principal in particular stipulated that he would grant permission solely on the understanding that my thesis, like Stephen Ball's seminal text on Beachside Comprehensive (1981), would be written in such a way that the Academy could not be identified. This added to the challenge of crafting the final narrative which has required several iterations to ensure that I fulfilled my obligations in this respect. The issue of confidentiality also applied to the participants and has resulted in the need to make alterations to the text to safeguard the principle of confidentiality and certain data have had to remain unreported. Whilst this has resulted in a partial portrayal of some data, nonetheless, I remain confident in the veracity of the findings which are able to be presented.

3.12 Analysing the data

Figure 1 outlines the steps that I took through the data analysis. There were four main stages to my analysis of the data each of which involved a number of specific steps.

Stage 1: Identifying my responses

After each of the interviews I spent some time reflecting on the ways in which I had responded to the participant and the story that had been told. This took the form of personal memos as advocated by Radnor (2001) which articulated my initial thoughts, ideas and feelings. Once all the stories had been transcribed I

began the process of immersion in the data. The first step was to undertake a reading and re-reading of each story to establish the overall plot of the story – what were the main events, the protagonists and the subplots. I also began to look for recurrent themes or ideas within the plot. During these readings I read for myself in the texts in the sense that I located my background, experiences and emotional responses to the storyteller and the story. This allowed me to examine how my responses, my assumptions and views might affect my interpretation of the participants' words. As Mauthner and Doucet (1998) state, *'If we fail to name these emotions and responses they will express themselves in other ways such as in our tone of voice or the way in which we write about that person'* (p127).

Figure 1.

	Key Stages of analysis	Steps
Stage 1	Identifying my responses ↓	Drafting initial reflections or memos First reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key elements of the plot - Identifying my responses to the participants and their stories
Stage 2	Familiarising myself with the data ↓	Second reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voice of 'I' in the text Identifying recurring themes Developing a thematic index
Stage 3	Managing and reducing the data ↓	Tagging the data Sorting and synthesising the data by theme – creating a thematic chart Defining elements and dimensions Refining categories Categorising 'types' of response
Stage 4	Developing explanations ↓	Visiting and revisiting the data and various stages of analysis Verifying and developing ideas Pursuing and dismissing lines of enquiry Shaping explanations
Stage 5	Crafting the narrative	Creating case records Crafting the reform story

Stage 2: Familiarising myself with the data

There were two steps involved in the data familiarisation process. The first involved using the Reading for the Voice of 'I' method (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998). This reading focussed on how the participants experience, feel and speak about themselves. It also extended to include how the participants experience, speak and feel about others. In order to establish some sense of this through the data I highlighted the word 'I' each time it was used. This threw into relief the number of times participants used 'we' and 'they'. This process emphasised the ways in which each participant saw and presented both him or herself and others within their story. It also developed a deeper sense of the participants' emotional responses both to the situation and to their perception of the responses of their colleagues, pupils and parents to the same situation. This stage of the data analysis represented an attempt to stay within the participants' multi-layered voices, views and perspectives rather than simply and quickly slotting their words into my own understanding of the world. This focussed attention on the voices of 'I' increased the possibility of creating more space to hear the teachers' voices (Mauthner and Doucet, *ibid*, p130). It certainly created the space for me to identify the relative distance between them and their colleagues which led to a key finding in the research.

The second step in this familiarisation with the teachers' stories which provided the foundation for the subsequent analysis was the identification of recurrent themes. This initially resulted in a long list of various themes and headings which were subsequently grouped into a manageable structure. I continued to use the language and terms used by the teachers themselves rather than any more abstract terminology to ensure that this thematic index remained close to the original transcripts. This provided the structure for the more detailed data analysis which followed. This thematic index is attached as Appendix C.

Stage 3: Managing and reducing the data

I then systematically undertook a number of stages in analysing and reducing the data starting with labelling or tagging each individual transcript to ensure that my initial thematic framework adequately covered the range of themes and to ensure that I had interrogated each element of the transcripts to understand not only what

was being said but any hidden messages which were being conveyed. An example of a tagged transcript is attached at Appendix D. Subsequently I created a set of thematic charts sorting and synthesising the data into a format which enabled me to concentrate on each subject or theme in turn. I ensured that sufficient data from the original context was included in the thematic charts to enable me to locate ideas, concepts and patterns and relate these back to the original context in which they arose. This structure also enabled me to assign the same material to more than one location on the chart if it contributed to more than one theme. Two extracts from these thematic charts are attached at Appendix E. This process allowed me to sort and synthesise the data in such a way which would enable me to refine the data into a number of key categories or dimensions classifying the data in ways which enabled the development of explanatory accounts. An example of this classification process is attached at Appendix F. This also supported the development of the categorisation of types which emerged and is reported on in Chapter 6.

Stage 4: Developing explanations

Developing explanations from the reduced data was the most challenging aspect of the process requiring me as it did to assume authorial responsibility for the interpretation of the data prior to articulating the findings of the research process. For someone new to the discipline of academic research this was a daunting undertaking and one which I approached with caution and rigour to the extent that I visited and revised the original data, the thematic charts, the classification and categorisation of 'types of response' over a protracted period of time. As I developed explanations I returned to the various stages of the data analysis to verify my thinking and further develop ideas. I pursued lines of enquiry which sometimes resulted in dead ends and others which took shape like pieces in a puzzle. While some explanations were shaped by the reasoning of the participants themselves, others were developed through actively searching for an underlying logic in the experiences which were recounted. This was particularly the case in arriving at the explanation about the development of an 'assumed objectivity'. At each and every stage the structure of Framework not only enabled but encouraged a

return to the original transcripts to verify my developing interpretation and understanding or to exemplify a category using the original voice of the teacher.

Stage 5: Crafting the narrative

The final and perhaps, the most challenging and rewarding stage of the research process has been the crafting of a new narrative. Analysis is not simply a matter of classifying, categorising or collating data. It is about the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Thus, the crafting of the narrative is not only a means of articulating the findings from a piece of research it is also a key part of the analysis itself involving as it does choices about what to include and how to present what is chosen. Writing helped me to think about the data in new and different ways and forced me to develop and try out analytical ideas in the process of writing.

As I moved towards this stage of my research I became increasingly conscious of the need to ensure that what I was writing was accessible to more than one target audience. First and foremost this is a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. However, if examiners were my sole audience I would not have spent nearly six years thinking about the ways in which I wanted to conduct my research and completing and presenting the findings of my data analysis. My intended audience has been threefold. My first audience is those who are reading this as a piece of academic research and as a contribution to new knowledge in the field. My second audience is teachers who are themselves facing major change and who may feel supported through gaining some insight into the experience of others in a similar situation. If their leaders and change agents read it too, all well and good. My third audience is those who make policy at a national level. The impact of externally imposed change on teachers who must also continue to face the exigencies of daily life in challenging circumstances is a factor which should be taken into account by those who make such critical decisions. While it may not alter the decision it would, perhaps, contribute to a more effective assessment of the resources and time required to manage the change. Given that I was writing for

more than one audience, the crafting of my narrative had to be suitably rigorous and academically informed at the same time as trying to entice lay people to dip into part, or all, of my narrative.

To ensure that I remained rooted in the stories that my participants had told and for the reasons outlined at the beginning of the next chapter I began the process of writing by creating case records of each story. These acted as a touchstone for the writing which followed. In that same way that I returned regularly to the original transcripts throughout the data analysis I frequently reread the case records as I crafted the final narrative which follows.

Chapter 4: Case records

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter fulfils a number of objectives. First, it represents the outcome of the first stage of data analysis following the first and second readings of the transcripts. Second, it acts as an 'invitation' to the reader to participate (Crites cited in Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) by reading and reliving the case records vicariously (Connelly & Clandinin, *ibid*). Third, it is included to support the trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) and plausibility (Hammersley, 1998) of my findings. Fourth, it ensures that the particularity of each 'teacher story' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) continues to be heard within a narrative which seeks to uncover commonalities and create a 'reform story' (Craig, 2003).

4.1.1 First stage of data analysis

The case records (Stenhouse cited in Stake, 2005) have been drafted from original reflections or memos written in response to my first and second readings of the transcripts of teachers' stories using the voice-centred relational method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). They therefore represent the first stage in my narrative as I came to understand the plot and the wider story being told from each individual's standpoint. They also represent one stage of the reflexive process as I explicitly analysed and articulated my response to what was being said and those things that were left unsaid and how each teacher communicated his or her story. As part of this I reflected on the ways in which I had responded to participants during the course of each interview and the impact that this may have had on their story and the way it was told.

4.1.2 Invitation to participate

In crafting these case records I sought to achieve the distance advocated by Schultz, Schroeder and Brody(1997) and consciously narrate key elements of the 'scene' and 'plot' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) as

articulated by each participant. As Connelly and Clandinin (2000) note: *'time and place, plot and scene, work together to create the experiential quality of narrative'*. The case records, therefore act as an invitation to the reader to become familiar with key elements of the scene and plot as experienced by the individual characters within the narrative. The scene is set by describing the context in which the teachers work and their perspective on their colleagues. It is also communicated through the teacher's personal history and responses. Each character in the 'plot' places a different emphasis on key events and different elements of the timeline and provides the reader with a sense of the 'whole' (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). The case records therefore enable the reader to contextualise the wider reform story which is jointly told by individual teachers within the narrative as a whole

4.1.3 Trustworthiness and transferability

As I outlined in Chapter 3 rigour in the application of both methodology and interpretation is critical to securing the trustworthiness or authenticity of findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This is particularly the case in qualitative research studies. The case records in this chapter represent a key step in securing this trustworthiness by providing an intellectual stepping stone for the reader between the individual stories and my interpretation of the findings. The case records situate the data, present it from the perspective of each respondent and represent an alternative means of reducing and displaying the data (Hopkins, 1987). They engage the reader in the plot and context and thus enable him/her to determine the plausibility (Hammersley, 1998) and transferability (Whitehead, 2004) of the reform story articulated in the chapters which follow. In presenting these case records I have tried to reflect the language used by the participants, often inserting direct quotes from the transcripts. Inevitably as summaries they also contain my own perspective on what has been said and reflect the first stage of the interpretive process. At this stage I have refrained from analysis of the content preferring the reader to make their judgements about the individuals concerned.

4.1.4 Particularity of individual voice

Finally the chapter recognises the importance of the individual teacher stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) and how they contribute to the wider reform story (Craig, *ibid*) and narrative. The individual stories demonstrate common characteristics and differences; some characteristics may be redundant and others particularly important. As Stake says (2005) both the redundancy and the variety are important. This Chapter seeks to give voice to the individuals who participated in creating the wider reform story and to ensure that in the creation of new meaning the individuality of their own experience and emotions is not lost.

4.2 Roger

Roger acknowledges from the outset of his interview that he had been aware of an impending change since 2004 when he first arrived in the region. Yet, despite this awareness which had informed his career path and the move to a promoted post he had been surprised by the speed of the process and by how the process had seemed to accelerate once it was underway. His interview dwells on this issue and the impact that it had on both him and others. He proffers possible explanations for the rapidity of the process suggesting that the Local Authority and the sponsors could have lost the funding for the Academy if the process had not been completed on time and that it may represent a standard timescale for schools becoming Academies. His language also indicates that he perceived that this speed led to an element of coercion in the process with plans being 'pushed through':

And then from being in that situation, everything seemed to happen very, very quickly with the Academy. Suddenly the plans were being pushed through and, you know, suddenly it went from something that could happen to something that did happen very, very quickly. So the change was very quick'

He believes that another 12 months would have allowed time for things to have become embedded before the Academy opened and implies that other staff (not necessarily him) would have been better able to manage the change if they had not had to deal with the suddenness of everything. The impact on staff morale was significant, something which pupils seem to have sensed and standards of behaviour declined as a result.

Roger's view is that, under these circumstances, staff failed to grasp the bigger picture and planned only for the short term.

It is Roger's perception that a lot of people were highly apprehensive about becoming an Academy both in relation to a potential loss of status and because their role might change. The concern here focussed not only on the fear of moving outside well established comfort zones but was also related to behaviour and the perception that behaviour amongst the older pupil population was poor and that it would be a *tough job* to put it right. Roger appears to have adopted a pragmatic attitude towards events indicating that although he had looked around for other posts elsewhere he had decided that he would 'just go with it'. He knew staff from the other school involved and got on with them and felt that things would work out reasonably well for him.

This pragmatism characterises much of the personal response within Roger's story. He feels that it was fair that there would be three years' salary protection for teachers on TLRs which would enable them to find something else or cut their cloth accordingly and that it was reasonable that staff were not given too much information in case it was subject to change. Furthermore he recognises that any sort of major change is going to create difficulties until it is complete. This pragmatic approach continued to influence him once he was in his new context as he talks about adjusting to new circumstances, getting on with it and the need to *wait and see* whether things that are not going well will even out.

Understandably, and unashamedly, Roger is very conscious of the need to 'safeguard' himself throughout this process. As mentioned above, he had sought a promoted post when changes were first mooted. Later in his story he suggests that people, 'quite rightly start looking after number one' suggesting that they want to come out of the shake-up with something they like or make sure that they are somewhere else. However this does not appear to be solely about self interest as he also talks about the desire to do the job to the best of his

ability and wanting to assume more responsibilities than simply those of a main scale teacher in order to do something for his protected TLR.

Roger is one of the few participants whose story dwells on both the before and after. He alludes to positive aspects of the change process without being specific about anything other than the new opportunities it might bring. The major thrust of his before and after story focuses on the issue of pupil behaviour. While he mentions that behaviour declined in the final weeks of the term before the Academy opens he is considerably more preoccupied with the longer term history of behaviour amongst the older pupil population over the past few years and the decline in standards of behaviour since the Academy opened after an initial honeymoon period. He wonders whether '*they*' (the new senior management team) knew the extent of the behaviour issues before they took up post and suggests that the older pupils had been *getting away with murder* for a number of years. He thinks that, while people have good intentions, they may have misunderstood the nature of the problem given the setting whereas it is his belief that behaviour in the area 'is as difficult as it gets' and the schools do not get adequate parental support. Despite being impressed with improvements in the first term, at the time of the interview (during the second term) he feels that that there has been a significant decline in standards of behaviour and that there are no consequences, which is having an impact on pupil attitudes. He and his colleagues are taking appropriate measures but there is no follow up by senior staff. It is his view that changing this entrenched pattern of behaviour will be a massive job.

Roger is largely silent on the issue of teaching and learning and educational standards for young people although he does suggest that if things get done right then the kids get the best education. At no time does he talk about pupil aspirations or what the Academy might achieve for them. He is more concerned with the impact that they have on him. Roger's story is characterised by a preoccupation with behaviour but also a pragmatic approach and conscious attempts to be fair about the process and how it was managed.

4.3 Mona

Mona is a relatively young teacher who worked in a school perceived by her and others to be successful prior to the opening of the Academy. She presents as an empathetic character who expresses concern about many of the other staff and the impact that the change process has had on them and on the school as a whole. She paints herself as a very positive person and draws a contrast between her own responses to the change events and those of her colleagues. It is not clear how long Mona has been a teacher in the school but there is evidence of a strong commitment to the pupils, her colleagues and to the school as a whole. This permeates the whole of her story although there are also one or two signs that she may be in the first stages of switching her allegiance to the Academy and what it stands for.

The preoccupation with the status of the predecessor school is demonstrated in a number of ways. Mona starts her story by alluding to the fact that the school fought hard to prevent its inclusion in the Academy. She indicates that parents were upset by the proposed changes as they had actively selected the school for their children at age 4 or 5, many of them travelling quite a distance to get to school, something which had surprised her. They had made this choice as the predecessor school had a good reputation within the local community and was perceived to be a high achieving school. That the school was deemed to be high achieving and therefore knew what it was doing influenced much of Mona's response to the new routines and procedures being implemented within the Academy.

The predecessor school had a strong corporate culture which was apparent throughout Mona's story and which had a significant influence both on her reactions to the change and on those of her colleagues. This continued despite changes to leadership during the lead-up to the Academy. Mona and her colleagues were used to being fully consulted over planning and other key decisions and were uncomfortable with what they perceived to be a lack of consultation which they experienced as lack of control. Mona, perhaps more than any other participant, uses a wide range of vocabulary to articulate the impact that this had on people. She

describes staff variously as unhappy, worried, distressed, upset, stressing, anxious and not in control, using some of the words several times throughout her story. However she was at pains to point out that at no stage did she, or any of her colleagues, allow this to impact on the pupils. They organised a number of closing events for pupils giving the old school a good send off and emphasised the positive aspects of becoming an Academy. Using the voice relational method of analysis highlighted the fact that Mona's story is peppered with the words *we* and *our*. She says that '*decisions were being made that **we** have no control over and weren't involved in*' and '*that's just the way **our** school works*'. At the same time she explicitly separates herself from her colleagues on a number of occasions indicating, for example, that people can be very keen to be negative but she is not like that and that she works hard but unlike others does not take problems from work home with her. This contrast drawn between her and others is articulated in various ways throughout Mona's story as if she is consciously trying to separate her responses to the situation from the responses of those around her. It is however, interesting to note that six months after the Academy opened she is still saying that that is '*not how **we** are as a staff*'.

In common with a number of other participants Mona dwells on the impact of changing practice as staff who had previously worked in a relatively small autonomous school become subject to the demands of a larger organisation. While Mona understands the need for a high presence of new senior managers keen to understand the new environment in which they are working, equally she and her colleagues are frustrated by the impact of new expectations and the introduction of new ways of working particularly as these do not take account of what she perceives to be good practice within the predecessor school. It is however interesting to note that initial frustration is beginning to give way to recognition that there are advantages of working in the Academy particularly the ability to work alongside and consult a wider range of colleagues. While there are ongoing concerns which continue to be expressed there is also a growing acclimatisation and acceptance of the new working environment.

Mona's story is characterised by a certain naivety and a lack of political awareness. Her story prior to the opening of the Academy centres entirely on her school. Any other local schools are mentioned only in relation to characteristics of her own school i.e. its high achieving status and parental preference. The predecessor secondary school is not mentioned at all. Clearly it had no role to play in the story from her perspective. Even once the Academy is open her focus remains on colleagues teaching the same age range and there is no reference to the all age nature of the Academy. At no time does Mona relate the change to Academy status to a wider local or national context or identify why it might have been necessary in the local context in which she is working. It is as if the change process, the plot, is only significant in relation to the impact that it had made on Mona, her colleagues and to a lesser extent the pupils with whom they are working.

4.4 Ryan

In contrast, a relatively young teacher, Ryan is very politically aware in terms of both the story he tells and the manner in which he tells it. He locates his story in the wider local and national context describing the challenging circumstances at the predecessor school and making reference to the national Academies agenda, the lack of research into Academies and the negative press they have received particularly amongst the unions. At the same time his political astuteness ensures that he is measured in how he tells his story, weighing his words carefully before elaborating on certain points. In his own words, a sceptic, Ryan offers a more analytical perspective on events than most others. Like Roger he was aware of the proposal to form an Academy when he was appointed. He actively chose to begin his career in a challenging environment and was keen to '*earn his stripes*' something which he had clearly done as he had been promoted since the Academy opened. Ryan, along with many others, alludes to the speed with which events unfolded from both his perspective and that of other staff.

It seemed like it took almost sort of 12 months from consultation to opening. I realise it was actually much longer than that but I think my perception and the perception of other staff was that it was

something that may or may not be happening and then all of a sudden it was something that will be happening very, very quickly.

Ryan embraced the concept of the Academy, seeing it as an opportunity for the pupils as well as for him. He recognised that things in the predecessor schools were not what they should be and suggests that progress simply wasn't being made and that something needed to be done. He points to a clear division amongst staff on this issue both during the consultation stage and six months after the Academy opened, at the time of the interview. He cites the example of a middle leader in his school who felt so strongly that she subsequently left whereas an older, more experienced member of staff who had previously indicated that he had seen it all before positively welcomed the Academy and what it stood for. Ryan adopted a pragmatic view:

I could either be difficult or I could embrace the change, so having done that it has been positive. Had I not chosen, had I decided that I was clinging on to the old school, I would not have been so positive. I would imagine that, you know, every discussion of this new policy oh here we go ...

Ryan does not understand the reluctance to embrace the Academy proposal feeling that it was not based on anything concrete. In the face of negativity from others he says that he simply became more determined not to react in the same way. Not only did Ryan feel that the Academy presented an opportunity for dramatic change but that this was, in fact, being realised in practice albeit not without some practical problems.

Ryan has an interesting take on communication during the transition phase. Unlike most other participants he feels that communication was good. Meetings were characterised by open and honest discussions with questions asked and answered as far as they could be. Any issues with communication he attributes to the fact that the predecessor school senior team determined what and how new information was presented to staff. He is not alone in this holding this opinion. He suggests that having representatives of the Academy in the school earlier would have facilitated more effective communication but realises that this is something that would have been controlled by the outgoing senior leadership team. Those staff who did not realise that

communication was controlled in this way may have been anxious about what was being done. However, Ryan's expectation was that someone somewhere would be doing the things that needed to be done or it would have been mayhem in September and it wasn't.

Initially unsure about the changes that would be put in place he says that this is becoming clearer and the way forward easier to understand. Most notable is the increased focus on teaching and learning. While the predecessor school had implemented data tracking and various interventions he feels that there is now a long term focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising standards. The Learning Walks are having an impact with regard to this, not only providing an opportunity to make judgements about what is happening but also to identify problems and therefore be in a position to address them.

Ryan was surprised at the pupils' reaction to the Academy proposal. Initially they wanted to hold onto their old school, something he puts down to a fear of the unknown. This reaction from pupils may have given rise to the expectation or even anticipation amongst the predecessor school staff about the first day of term and how the pupils would behave as they had been quite militant in the past. In the end the first day of the Academy was uneventful. Indeed pupils had indicated in the summer term that they were going to behave badly then as they would not be able to once the Academy opened although Ryan is not sure where this perception came from. Ryan has seen a change in the attitude of pupils already. Casual, sloppy dress is now a thing of the past. Pupils are now expected to come to school dressed as young professionals and are getting into that. Pupils in all year groups are now attending more regularly and there is a change in the work ethic. He hopes that this is a sign that there will be a change in their aspirations and that those who are considering further and higher education will set their sights high. He is, however, a realist and accepts that such things will not happen overnight. This is exemplified in one story tells he tells about a pupil:

I had an interesting conversation with one of my tutees. She'd had an interview with the sixth form mentor ... and she said you know there was a genuine drive in the Academy to make sure that you've

got somewhere ...and her response was 'I was at (name of predecessor school) for 4 years and no one was bothered. What happened to this? Why are they suddenly bothered now?'

He recognises difficulties as temporary and plans to stay at the Academy. He is interested in the pupil reaction to the new building and whether teaching and learning and grades will improve.

4.5 Jenny

A recently qualified teacher Jenny's story is marked by feelings of disappointment and disillusionment; emotions which she believes are shared by many of her colleagues. Young, naive and initially motivated by what the Academy seemed to offer despite some uncertainty and confusion, no more than six months later her levels of motivation have plummeted despite attempts to remain positive. The source of Jenny's disappointment and disillusionment is very clearly articulated: her high hopes and, to a certain extent her unrealistic expectations, have not been realised in practice. Indeed, in some ways she feels that things have gone backwards.

Jenny's experience of life in the predecessor school mirrors views expressed by other participants; that it was unstructured particularly in relation to the management of behaviour and pupil attitudes to learning. While she discusses aspects of her teaching her focus was primarily on the lack of pupil motivation, participation and engagement. Jenny's enthusiasm for the Academy centred on her belief that it could address these issues and quickly. At one point in her story she recognises, belatedly, that this will take time. Her emotional reaction and sense of disappointment, however, are directly related to her perception that not only has progress been limited but in some ways she feels as if the Academy has taken a backward step.

The primary focus of Jenny's story is on issues relating to pupil behaviour, on rules and regulations and their enforcement (or lack of enforcement). Like Roger, she too, indicates that there was an initial improvement in behaviour and expectations and that rules were enforced. This seemed to quickly tail off with staff 'letting

them get away with things' again after the initial honeymoon period. While she does criticise management for not following up on things she is not really specific about what was actually different after the first few weeks or why the strict management of behaviour declined after a few weeks. Her perception is that while pupils were excluded for incidents of poor behaviour there was no change in their patterns of behaviour on their return to school. Experience of another Academy where significant numbers of pupils were expelled may have fuelled Jenny's expectations of the transformational ability of becoming an Academy. She states that 'it was from their staff point of view, you know, a really good place to work, because a lot of the kids were kind of kicked out of school in a way, en masse'.

Jenny's story would seem to suggest that she was not alone in holding what may have been unrealistic expectations of a transformation in behaviour within a very short timescale. She believes that there is currently a negative atmosphere with people suffering from stress and some on long term sick leave. Equally she recognises that it is the stark contrast between reality and what may have been unrealistically high expectations which has had a major impact on staff morale.

I think we thought it was going to be a lot different and then it wasn't, or it started to be back the same. I think you know motivation and things really dropped because we envisaged it being a lot different. I think if we knew it was going to be the same we would have been more prepared and it wouldn't have felt as bad as it did.

This portrayal of events is in stark contrast to that of Ryan, Nora and Rebecca. Despite recognising the challenges that they are facing they perceive that progress is being made.

Jenny's story is full of contradictions. She was looking forward to the Academy and yet didn't let herself feel too excited; she wasn't worried about the change and yet conveyed anxiety about not knowing what would be in place when the term started; she is concerned about behaviour and yet speaks very positively about some groups of pupils; she speaks about the need for wholesale exclusion but also states that she feels that the

Academy is not caring for the pupils; she feels that she is being negative and yet that she is a positive person. In the end she admits that she doesn't actually understand what it is that has been so hard.

Jenny's story is dominated by the specific circumstances of her role in the Academy. She recognises similar feelings in other staff and empathises with them and also empathises with some areas of their concern which she did not share. Like Mona, however, she does not place her story in the wider context of an organisation attempting to achieve transformation within a community nor does she focus on pupil reactions or their progress.

4.6 Nora

Nora's story provides an interesting perspective on the issues within what was the predecessor secondary school.

Despite the unfortunate and clumsy way in which the advent of the Academy was announced to her and her colleagues Nora approached the situation with a high degree of equanimity. She attributes this to her age indicating that if it was awful she would simply sit it out. She recognises and regrets the significant negative impact that the change process had on many of her colleagues but from a personal perspective adopted a very pragmatic approach to her future. As a result of her specific expertise she knew that she might be deployed within the secondary phase and accepted this knowing full well that it would take her out of her comfort zone. She tells former colleagues that she *'doesn't like it but she doesn't hate it'*. She even says that she quite likes it now that she is used to it.

Nora's is a highly pupil focussed narrative which takes account of her reactions and those of other staff but whose overriding concern is the pupils, their progress and their feelings of self worth. On moving to the secondary phase her first impressions reveal shock not only at the state of the learning environment and how

shabby it was but on the impact that this would inevitably have had on the pupils. She expresses the view that it is no wonder that behaviour declines dramatically in such an environment after what they have been used to. The environment itself tells pupils how little they are valued. She describes her new work area as a dump and says that she could have cried because it was so foul. One of her first tasks was to create a decent learning environment for her pupils, something which took two full days. There was also a lack of equipment and resources which surprised her. She had anticipated that the secondary school would have been well equipped with ICT, for example, but she had to work without an interactive whiteboard in her classroom for the first five months. It was only because she had a student teacher that this situation was remedied.

Nora's concern about pupils' self worth is exemplified in a story she tells about one pupil in particular:

And one of the telling things was a couple of weeks ago, one of the really nice girls in Year 9 just said: "Have you seen the new building?" I went: "No – I've seen the model." She said: "Oh, Miss, it's on the tele," in reception. She said: "Oh, Miss, it's lovely – it's far too good for here." I said: "But why?" "Well, (name of a local city), yeh, but not here – it's far too good for us." I thought isn't that telling that this is what these children think about themselves, that they are not worth a new building. That's so sad.

Despite the preoccupation with behaviour issues reflected in the stories of some other staff Nora only describes one class which caused her particular problems. This class she describes as horrendous at first and says that she couldn't believe the behaviour, the lack of respect and foul language. While the first lesson was a *stand-off* she says that even this group is not so bad now. While they are nowhere near perfect she now has 80% control of them. Other than that she has not experienced behaviour as an issue despite coming from an environment which she describes as 'a nice cushy little number'. The pupils perceive her as strict.

Nora is equally concerned about the lack of progress made during their secondary years by pupils who she had previously encountered in the primary school. She identifies pupils who are not now expected to achieve a grade C who she believes should have achieved this as a minimum.

Nora describes two completely different reactions to the proposal to become an Academy. Her former colleagues were dreading the change whereas the response of her new colleagues, those who were working in the predecessor secondary school was *'Bring it on – things cannot get any worse'*. Her impression was that things had become so bad that they would have preferred anything other than the status quo. Interestingly however, while her former colleagues have, in general settled into their new roles, it is the former secondary school staff who have struggled with the practical realities of the new regime.

Nora was welcomed into her new team by colleagues but expressed surprise at the levels of dissatisfaction they articulated. She couldn't really understand why they complained about various things. While she took new and more rigorous monitoring of learning activity into her stride, despite some concerns about the manner in which this was done on occasions, her new colleagues didn't like the imposition of the learning walks and have noted an increase in their workload. Nora remarks that now the pressure is getting to them. Her response to this is *'They're going to have to get used to it, aren't they?'* She, on other hand, has been prepared to take on additional out of hours classes to ensure that pupils have the best possible chance of success and cannot understand their reluctance to do the same. It is interesting to note that in this environment Nora's ability has been recognised (whereas it had not been previously) and, much to her surprise and delight, she has recently been promoted to a leadership role within her new team.

Nora dwells little on the period before the Academy opened. However she does refer to the uncertainty of that period and the difficulties facing individuals who were being deployed into new roles with new classes. She also expresses dismay about the circumstances in which a former, highly regarded colleague did not transfer to the

Academy. Her experience and that of her colleagues highlights the issue of communication particularly with regard to appointments to the new leadership structure. The interview process for the Principal and members of the senior and middle leadership teams were held in her predecessor school. The Principal Designate and the new team as they took up post were also based there. As a result staff on this site had access to what they believed to be privileged information as they saw people coming and going and became familiar with new faces. At the same time, as became clear in her story, this was not always as helpful as it might have been as assumptions were made about people which subsequently proved to be inaccurate.

4.7 Claire

Claire is a part time teacher who has become conscious that she is the oldest amongst what is now a relatively young staff team. She makes it clear that she works because she wants to rather than because she has to and celebrates the positive aspects of being a in a job share which she feels benefits both the pupils and the staff involved. When new posts were advertised in the Academy she made a conscious decision not to apply for any of them.

Claire's story has a clear chronological path in which she describes how the school became involved in the Academy and the impact of this in the first months of transition and after the Academy opened. Claire and the colleagues in her team kept their heads down through this process and as a compliant group simply accepted the decision to become part of the Academy when it was taken. At that time it seemed too far in the distant future to have much relevance to most of them. This contrasts with the perception of other participants who comment on the relentless pace of events leading up to the Academy opening. It could also be a reflection of the age profile of the majority of staff in Claire's team, some of whom left as part of the transition.

Staff morale both in the run up to the Academy and subsequently is an issue of concern for Claire. She attributes a lack of information about what was happening to the fact that it was only the headteacher

attended meetings and that he did not communicate information very well to the wider body of the staff. She says that more information would have led to less insecurity amongst the staff. In her words staff were devastated at the end of the year when the predecessor school closed. Staff morale, which has remained low subsequent to opening, has been a direct result of major changes in the staff team which now has a much younger profile and more than one NQT, too many initiatives and, although this is not stated explicitly, feelings of disempowerment. Claire also recognises that it has been a difficult year and that the pressure of change itself has had a direct impact on staff and how they are feeling.

Claire is one of the few participants who reflects positively on the logic of establishing an all age Academy relating this to pupil progress, shared accountability for standards and the reduction of disaffection as pupils move from one school to another. However she is also very sensitive to the practical implications of working within a much larger organisation. She indicates that she and others had not realised how much things would be controlled from the top and comments that decisions which are made tend to be very secondary oriented and need to be adapted for the primary phase. While she understands the need for, and is used to, monitoring, she says that it felt less threatening in the previous environment. Now she feels that there is some kind of hidden agenda. Decisions within the larger organisation take longer and new habits need to be learned such as being more assertive to achieve desired outcomes for pupils. It is easy to feel sidelined as a small team within such a large organisation. Of particular note are the irritation which she expresses at the number of emails received along with the last minute nature of the demands that these require and the fact that she and her colleagues do not feel sufficiently valued or known by the senior team.

All the issues outlined above represent a significant change in the culture of the organisation since becoming part of the Academy but they are not the only ones that Claire alludes to. The predecessor school had established a very strong presence within a relatively isolated and deprived community. Indeed this was one of its significant strengths which also included well established relationships with parents. When the Academy

first opened parents, to their surprise, saw very little change in how things were run but changes to the external environment to comply with health and safety standards soon meant that direct access for parents became more difficult and have begun to create a cultural as well as a physical barrier between the community and the school.

The new build represents the golden egg for staff and the local community. Staff are currently working in a constrained environment which is not likely to improve in the next 18 months. Claire also expresses concern that the current facilities are not fit for purpose. Despite these difficulties Claire's hope is that the Academy will be successful, a hope reinforced by her belief that it is in teachers' nature to make things work. At the moment her perspective is that the staff are getting with on it and supporting each other with it even if they are not thriving. She stresses that she is not negative and recognises that some things may well have happened anyway. The main change for Claire is being part of a bigger organisation, *the mother ship*.

It's a sort of dilemma, isn't it, because we quite like being our own wee team, but you also have to feel part of the bigger ... the whole thing.

4.8 Gordon

Gordon tells a highly personal story which highlights perhaps more than others the complex interaction between work and personal stories and how personal ambitions can be realised (or not) through a change process. The transition to Academy status offered him the opportunity to make an unexpected but greatly desired leap into a new type of role. It was, as he says, a personal gamble but one which paid off. The success of this gamble inevitably affects his perspective on the Academy narrative and he is particularly aware that this is the case.

Despite the successful personal outcome Gordon is not wedded to the Academy process and says that he questioned whether it was the right way forward for these schools. He expresses reservations as a result of his

own political convictions about Academies in general but also about the sponsors and their motivation.

However he indicates that these were things he was reflecting on rather than worrying about. This, along with other comments that he makes, indicates that despite a certain stress level associated with whether he would achieve his desired personal outcome, Gordon has adopted a pragmatic approach to the change process. He did not share his concerns or views with others but appears to have made light of any issues which arose, having a few laughs about things in general with colleagues. Like Mona he stresses that he tries not to take work home with him and leads a separate family and work life. He adopted a *wait and see* approach to his personal future and determined that if things didn't work out the way he hoped he could always look for another post subsequently. As it happened he was *as pleased as punch* with the outcome and this in turn led to some feelings of guilt in relation to other members of staff although they were not resentful of his pleasure.

While Gordon says little about the staff responses to the Academy proposal or the months leading up to opening he does say that staff felt quite strongly that more was known than they were told and that any information would have been better than none. He also suggests that information should have been shared sooner than it was. He suggests that for staff who had worked in the same environment for a long time their very identity was at stake. Having said that, his perspective was that most staff were reasonably happy with their future role and classes. If he could identify anything which would have made a significant difference to the transition process it would have been more and better training opportunities to prepare staff for their new roles and responsibilities within the organisation.

Despite the weight of other personal issues during the lead-up to the Academy (both medical and practical) Gordon looked forward to starting in his new role. He was welcomed and offered significant support in this new context and says that without it his reaction would have been completely different. He knows of colleagues who did not make such an easy transition to their new working environment. The new leadership

has been tolerant and supportive of the inevitable steep learning curve he has had and he feels that the process of becoming an Academy and his personal journey within it that is, as yet, unfinished.

4.9 Rebecca

Rebecca's story is characterised by her enthusiasm for being a teacher and for the pupils in the Academy. While she is only in her second year of teaching she has previously worked as a Teaching Assistant and completed one of her teaching practices at the predecessor school where she was subsequently appointed. She is very positive about the Academy as it has the potential to offer the pupils she is passionate about the opportunities that they deserve. She describes herself as a champion of the school and recognises the need to raise aspirations and support pupils to develop skills and achieve qualifications to realise the aspirations that they can and should develop. Implicit in her story is the view that negative attitudes to education are ingrained within the local community but that it is possible for pupils to break out of the cycle. She believes the Academy can offer the power of money, new leadership and new facilities to support this aim and has already seen evidence of progress in the first six months.

While Rebecca chose to return to what is clearly a challenging context to take up her first teaching post she is not blind to its faults or the difficulties of working with pupils in this environment. She describes the kids as brilliant and loves the fact that they argue back and relishes the rewards of getting through to them when they do see the light, even with the not so brilliant kids. However she is quite clear that the culture of the school and the area needs to change. Her criticism of the predecessor school centres on the systems and procedures which did not provide an effective framework for improvement. She says that '*the buck stopped with the classroom teacher*' with no back up beyond this. As a result she learned to pick her battles. She is quite clear that this has changed in the Academy. Teachers and pupils understand the systems and know what happens in a given context not just in relation to disciplinary issues but other things as well. Pupils perceive that staff are working for them. While not everyone is on the same page, more are than before and with the back-up of

senior management this is making a difference. Closer monitoring and accountability also have a key role to play in securing this progress. Rebecca's perspective on improvements, particularly in relation to behaviour, is in direct contrast to the view expressed by Jenny.

Rebecca does have some criticisms of the transition process mainly related to the lack of information. In her view there were times when pupils seemed to know more about what was happening than staff. This, coupled with rumours and speculation, led to trepidation particularly about what was required for the start of the new term. Teachers weren't sure whether they should continue to teach what had previously been planned nor were they sure of who was in charge of what. She recognises that transition and planning for a new school take a long time but they did create a period of limbo which was uncomfortable. Her other main criticism centres on the lack of consultation with pupils about things such as the uniform which they felt was imposed on them. Rebecca relates the transition to Academy status to the wider national context expressing the view that the transition in this context was successful particularly in relation to some of the horror stories that she had read about in the press. She feels that things fell into place very quickly and that this was down to the staff who supported the pupils through the change process. This positive message about the staff overall is tempered by the knowledge that certain individuals have not been as positive. She certainly has a pragmatic approach, getting on with things because they are happening, but this is underpinned by her commitment to pupils in the area and finding the best ways of achieving success for them.

4.10 Sarah

Sarah's story begins by highlighting the fears and anxiety experienced by staff about their future roles and responsibilities and whether they would have a job at all. While this caused significant anxiety at the time, followed by relief when teachers understood their future roles, this is not the dominant thread within her story. Her overriding experience of the transition to Academy status is a positive one despite some initial

trepidation and concerns. Self contained, pragmatic and familiar with change Sarah is a teacher who loves her job and who recounts a narrative which is full of promise for the future.

Sarah offers similar observations to some other participants on the issues in the lead up to the opening of the Academy. She criticises the time delays in letting staff know about their future deployment indicating that while she could manage the impact on her (largely because she was focussed on SATs for the first time) it had an impact on staff morale in general. It was particularly difficult to watch people further up the hierarchy finding out about their posts while those at the chalk face had to keep on smiling and go about their daily business and wait longer. Sarah draws attention to the misconception amongst pupils that they would be moving to an entirely different site and the need to explain things very carefully to them. She also alludes to a lack of understanding amongst parents about the precise nature of the Academy and what it stood for. While her experience of the initial few weeks was nerve wracking (particularly the Learning Walks where she constantly felt the need to prove herself when senior staff visited her classroom) Sarah quickly came to terms with the new systems and procedures and has come to appreciate what they are for.

Sarah talks with passion about the larger organisation and the opportunities it offers. There is a wealth of expertise that she feels able to draw on and she particularly enjoys the opportunities for sharing practice, ideas and resources with a wider range of colleagues. Her experience has been that decision-making is inclusive and informed by professional dialogue. Planning is easier, training is of a high quality, new procedures provide clarity and are working and she appreciates the standardisation of practice which is taking place across the Academy. She no longer feels as if she is working alone but is part of a much larger organisation supported by effective electronic communication. Equally importantly she believes that there are more positive opportunities still to come despite any practical difficulties encountered to date.

4.11 Paul

Paul is an older, more experienced member of staff who had been at the predecessor secondary school for a number of years and has seen at least one change of headteacher in that time. He appears very aware of the feelings of the staff and pupils within the Academy including some negativity, but tries to place what is currently happening within a bigger picture. His view along with that of other participants is that it was time for a change as the previous regime was not always best for the pupils. He and his colleagues were therefore optimistic about the potential offered by the Academy to the extent that he actively encouraged other teachers to *'give it a go'*

Paul is overtly critical of the outgoing senior management team. He feels that there was little substance to improvements which were made indicating that while exam results may have improved that this was the result of quick fix measures rather than sound educational practice. He also concurs with other staff from the predecessor school that the back-up from senior management was not usually forthcoming and middle managers and classroom staff had to fend for themselves. Paul also refers to the lack of information during the lead in to the Academy but unlike others he suggests that members of the former senior leadership were selective in what they chose to share. He indicates that conversations with a colleague from elsewhere revealed that the staff in that school had received far more information and were better briefed about what was going on. Furthermore, Paul suggests that there was evidence of unprofessional conduct instigated by the predecessor senior management team that resulted in practice that was unfair to both staff and the sponsors. As a result of these concerns there was initial despair amongst the staff when members of the predecessor school senior management team were appointed to key posts within the new structure. However the fear that the same people would be in control has not been realised in practice as some have left and others are behaving differently.

While Paul expresses some reservations about the new structure which he describes as abstract and vague he is very positive about the new appointments which have been made, the professionalism of the new senior

leadership team and the fact that the new team have *hit the ground running*. Staff find the new structure confusing as there is a lack of clarity about the nature of people's roles and how they differ one from another. This has led to some criticism of individuals from staff. Paul suggests that this, along with a lack of strong pastoral support, may be factors contributing to the negative attitude which seems to prevail at the moment. Bizarrely, staff who had previously been optimistic about the Academy are very unhappy with many of them wanting to leave. He also feels that pupils are unhappy, with the older year groups believing that there has been a massive regression in the school. He attributes some of their unhappiness to the fact that they sense staff are unhappy.

At the same time as recognising the difficulties faced by staff and pupils currently Paul continues to set these difficulties within the context of a bigger picture and a long term vision. He recognises that some things are better, that new relationships need to be developed and that this will take time. Unlike some staff he feels that there is sufficient space in the buildings. He completes his story by saying that there was always going to be a period of flux and that while things may be challenging now the Academy will be a better place.

4.12 Barry

Barry's story is somewhat unusual. Initially deployed within a predecessor school by a supply agency he subsequently became a permanent teacher in the same school but stresses that he had no emotional attachment to the school. As expected, under the TUPE arrangements, he transferred to the secondary phase of the Academy but has since successfully been appointed into a support staff role, something he perceives as a real opportunity for personal development.

Like Roger, Rebecca and Ryan, Barry was aware of the Academy proposal when he first took up post in the predecessor school although very little information was available at the time. Staff were not aware of the timescale involved and Barry was left with the impression that it would be at least two years before anything

happened. He believes that this understanding of the timescales involved was a result of poor communication and that when things did start to happen staff felt that everything was rushed. The lack of information meant that staff felt left out and led them to believe that there was a conspiracy theory, that they were not being told things that the sponsors did not want them to know. Barry's feeling was there was simply no time to communicate or perhaps that there was no time to present things in an appropriate way. He is quite clear that better communication would have eased the process of transition. As it was staff were unsettled and beset by uncertainty.

Barry describes waiting for the decision about future roles and responsibilities as like being in the dentist's chair. However the thought of what was going to happen was much worse than the reality. Once people knew what classes they were going to teach morale improved. While this mirrors the responses from other participants he also makes some further observations. Firstly that while staff were provided with organisation charts of the future staffing structure it was very difficult to see how individuals fitted into this new structure. Secondly, he understands that it is necessary to start making appointments from the top but draws attention to the fact that most of the staff involved were bog standard teachers and they were left until last. This enabled those staff who were disaffected by the process to become more vocal. Once decisions had been communicated the impact of this disaffection dissipated as other teachers had their own personal agenda to follow and were planning for their new roles. Lastly, Barry says that while most people understood the difficulties of communication and that it was inevitably an impersonal process, nevertheless for an individual caught up in the transition it was a highly personal process as it affected their jobs and their lives. However, as he also says, at least teachers knew that they would have a job whereas some support staff felt that this was in doubt.

As a newcomer to the region Barry alludes to his surprise at the local mindset and parochial attitudes. His perception is that there was an automatic resistance to the process which may not have been as marked

elsewhere and that this added to the impact of the other factors involved. Despite the criticisms of the management of the process, in contrast to some other teachers, Barry perceived that the Academy would offer him opportunities.

Barry's story focuses primarily on the lead up to the Academy dwelling very little on events after the Academy opened. His preoccupation is with teachers and what happened to them and he is silent on issues such as teaching and learning or the impact on pupils.

4.13 Felicity

Felicity's story ranges back and forth across the chronology of becoming an Academy and the school context at that time to issues facing staff now. It is full of contrasts and apparent contradictions as she tries to reflect the full range of emotions and events experienced by her and others. She freely admits that she found things traumatic at the beginning of the process because she doesn't like change. This was compounded by personal circumstances when the Academy first opened as a result of which she missed the initial meetings and suffered from stress on her return to work.

The predecessor school had been dogged by stories that things would change for a number of years. These primarily involved knocking the school down and amalgamation with another local school. Staff had always thought that these were nothing but rumours and that nothing would ever actually happen. *'And then all of a sudden, boom, it was there. It did happen and it seemed to come on rather quickly'*. People felt that the subsequent consultation was rushed through. They didn't know what to expect and were afraid of the unknown particularly as they were also unsure whether or not they would still have jobs. Parents didn't really understand the implications of becoming an Academy and it is only now that some of those implications are dawning on them. There were also concerns about the future leadership given that the headteacher of the

predecessor school had been there for twenty years and Felicity described the staff as being like a family group.

Once the new leadership teams had been confirmed Felicity felt more relaxed. She welcomed the refreshing change of approach and the personal qualities of the new leaders in comparison to the management style of the predecessor school head. At the same time she feels that the new leaders are overloaded and that this has an impact on communication and staff capacity.

Felicity outlines a range of current concerns and describes staff on several occasions as disgruntled, even angry, highlighting that there is more bickering than previously. She says that previously she worked with a nice team of people but that now there are constant undercurrents. While this is not directly attributed to working in a larger organisation it is clearly the new organisational structures and requirements which are having such a significant impact. These are many and various. There is no consultation about new procedures and new ways of doing things. They are simply imposed externally; there are too many and they have to be implemented too quickly. This is resulting in a greater workload. Teachers not only feel that they are not listened to, they also feel undermined and undervalued.

And a lot of the staff felt the same things, whereby they don't feel as if their opinions had been taken on board. Instead of coming to staff and saying: "Look, we're thinking about doing this – what do you think?" It's not – it's a case of: "We're doing this, it's going to happen – boom, its happening," and it's not a case of: "We're going to be doing this over a period of time, it's going to start and it's going to start now."

Practices which have been established over a long period of time are being challenged. School visits, for example, which previously would have been handled in a relatively informal manner, are now subject to specific procedures otherwise they do not go ahead. Responsibilities which were previously held by individuals

have been removed as a result of a corporate approach across the Academy and social practices in the catchment area have been challenged by the new regime. Support staff can be withdrawn, and often at short notice, to cover other duties elsewhere when people are absent. This inevitably addresses the needs of the wider organisation but has a direct impact on the planning and workload of individuals. Staff are often told that the answer to a given question is not known and that someone will try and find out. Too often, no answers are forthcoming. Felicity says that such stories are not peculiar to her team alone. She has heard similar stories from other teachers. The general staff climate is not improved by the rumours circulating that there will be cutbacks next year and some staff may lose their jobs.

Despite these difficulties, Felicity contends that she is fine and is settling in and that although there are lots of day to day problems there are also a lot of good ideas. She recognises that becoming an Academy is a big step but feels that finding ways to achieve more effective communication and involve staff more will alleviate concerns and improve things generally. Her assessment is that teachers continue to be frightened of change and they, and she, find it hard to understand the new organisation. She believes that it may take a few years until things settle down at which stage people are likely to forget the problems they are experiencing now.

4.14 Stories or narratives?

So why are the case records a reflection of teachers' stories rather than narratives? The teachers in this study were asked to articulate their experience of the change to Academy status as it impacted on them as individuals. These are therefore stories of their lived experience, an experience which had been shared with others, but experienced differently by each individual. This was the first time that these teachers had been asked to articulate their story and reflect with me as the researcher on what had happened and how they had responded. The stories were thus created through the research process. They were punctuated by pauses, reflective statements and, on occasions, questions or comments which located me within their story. These

were not well rehearsed or retold narratives which were recreated for my benefit. They were crafted in the telling as teachers relived aspects of the process of change. Indeed Felicity and Claire both became quite agitated at various points in the story while Nora tested out her new found confidence in the telling of her story. While some teachers had clearly reflected more on the process and indeed some came prepared for the interview each participant created new meaning and understanding as they shared and tested their experiences with me as a researcher.

4.15 Conclusion

The case records in this Chapter demonstrate the diversity of responses from within the participant group with individual teachers focussing on different aspects of the change process and its impact. Together they create a complex fabric of issues, concerns, hopes and emotional responses to a significant change event in their lives. The Chapter which follows highlights the key themes which emerge from these stories and identifies key change variables which impacted to a greater or lesser extent on the participant group.

Chapter 5: Confronting change

The identification and impact of external and internal change variables

5.1 Introduction

Individual personality, history and circumstances, perhaps obviously, determined teachers' initial responses to the Academy proposal (Smollans, 2006). Those who were familiar with the issues at the secondary school whether or not they had taught there recognised that '*something had to be done*' (Roger). The principal focus for this belief lay in the perceived behaviour and attitude of pupils. Those who worked at the predecessor secondary school acknowledge this as an issue but also reflect on the need to raise aspirations and standards and address shortcomings in leadership and management. In contrast, most participants drawn from the primary phase articulate their struggle to understand the relevance of the Academy proposal to them or to their school.

Irrespective of personal perspectives or prior experience there are recurring themes relating to the process of change across all the stories told. Some of these relate specifically to the period before the Academy opened (the implementation phase), others to the period after, others take shape during the implementation phase and are further developed through the process of transition. Participants identify a number of variables which characterise this process of change. They also identify various personal factors which mediate their responses to the chain of change events. These variables shape the ways in which each individual experiences the change journey. Given the interaction between these two types of variables it is necessary to distinguish one from the other. Consequently, they are hereafter referred to as external change variables (those which are related to the process of change) and internal change variables (those which are related to personal factors or circumstances). External change variables include the ways in which information was communicated, the pace and timing of change and issues relating to future roles and responsibilities. Internal change variables include the favourability of personal and professional outcomes, disposition and prior experience.

In the Chapter which follows I discuss these variables in relation to the three stages of the change journey experienced by participant teachers in this study. These are: living with uncertainty, understanding and acceptance of change and coming to terms with new realities. While there is no suggestion that participants experience the change journey as a linear process, conceiving it in terms of three stages provides a useful analytical construct to examine the ways in which they confront, or are confronted by, the changes which take place. Taking this approach enables the reader to understand the interaction between external and internal change variables and the impact that this has on the teachers concerned at various points in the process. It also supports an understanding of the whole change journey and facilitates the meta-analysis and discussion offered in Chapter 6. The chapter ends by considering to what extent each of the participants places what happened to them within a wider educational context and how, or if, this helps or hinders their ability to understand and accept the changes that took place.

5.2 Living with uncertainty: first stage of the change journey

In Fullan (1993) change is likened to '*a planned journey into uncharted waters in a leaky boat with a mutinous crew*'. Whether or not the 'crew' was mutinous or felt that the journey was planned, there is no doubt that they felt that they were in uncharted waters. Living with a high degree of uncertainty was clearly an uncomfortable fact of life for every teacher during the initial stage of the Academy process. That this stage lasted for longer than some felt necessary compounded the state and its impact. To a greater or lesser extent teachers speak of a climate of unpredictability and insecurity, the prevalence of conflicting information and unanswered questions along with resulting rumour and speculation. They indicate that there was no clear source of information and that senior staff were as uncertain about the future as they were. Fear of the unknown and no reliable guidance as to what would happen next and when it would happen led to apprehension if not anxiety and low teacher morale. This is specifically articulated by Mona:

But then it was, from what I can remember, there was just uncertainty, they didn't know who was going to be in charge of us, we didn't know who --- you know, what was going to happen, and obviously people higher above didn't know what was going to happen either, so we just kind of had to wait and see ---(Mona)

5.2.1 Initial impact of the proposed change

While this was inevitably a period of instability for all teachers involved in the process, for some the proposal and the resulting emotional impact came as more of a shock than for others.

I think it was just, like, we were shocked in that it seemed to us as the whole staff it came out-of-the-blue. It was never seen to have been on the horizon anywhere and it was just like ... the Head had been to a meeting ...what happened was we'd had an OFSTED, right. Had an OFSTED, and it was fine, and we were all called in at the end of the OFSTED: "Oh, well done," you know, "everything's been fine," and that was it. And then I think it was the following week ...we had another message went round: "A staff meeting tonight, everybody be in the staff room," you know, and the Head came in, and I am not exaggerating when I say he said: "Right, I've been to a meeting, it's changing into an academy and on 31st August next year you're all going to be sacked," and that was how it was ...that was ... and I am not exaggerating that, that was how it was done: "You are all going to be sacked on 31st August next year." (Nora)

This ill considered and inconsiderate introduction to such a significant change, no doubt, contributed to increased levels of uncertainty threatening as it did the livelihood of staff in the school.

For Mona and the colleagues in her team the announcement that their school was to become part of the Academy resulted in incomprehension rather than simply shock. Working in a highly rated environment they found it difficult to understand how it had become associated with the problems in the secondary school and

thus included within the proposal. For other participants the Academy proposal came as a bolt from the blue despite the fact that change of some description had been mooted for some time:

Well, it was, because for years – years – (name of predecessor school): “Oh, we’re going to be” --- it wasn’t called the academy then, it was going to be --- they were going to knock us down and, you know, this sort of thing, and amalgamate us. That was on the cards, but we always thought ---And then all of a sudden, boom, it was there, it did happen, and it seemed to come on rather quickly.

(Felicity)

As Felicity indicates once teachers knew of the proposal the speed with which events unfolded was yet further cause for disquiet. Participants spoke of things happening ‘*very, very quickly*’. Their perception was that something that may or may not happen suddenly became something that was happening and much more quickly than any of them anticipated. This disrupted the equilibrium of their daily lives and was disconcerting even for those teachers who appeared to take the whole process of change in their stride.

5.2.2 Varying responses as plans progress

Oddly, after the initial shock some teachers put the proposal completely out of their minds in the belief that it was too far in the future to worry about. They therefore continued with their normal lives until it became obvious that this was not the case. The contrast, then, between their expectation of a delay in implementation and the immediacy of the reality resulted in considerably heightened levels of uncertainty and concern. Such teachers speak of feeling that the consultation was pushed through, that everything was rushed, that there was no time for effective communication and that everything simply could not be accomplished within the timescales. There seemed to be an acceleration in the pace of change for these participants that resulted in a perceived loss of control as well as greater instability and uncertainty.

While uncertainty was experienced differently by different participants they each report on the impact of it on their colleagues in similar ways. Colleagues are variously described as unhappy, worried, distressed, upset,

stressing, anxious, shocked, worried sick and nervous. Despite this it is interesting that few participants describe their own reactions in the same way. Indeed some like Mona explicitly draw attention to this difference. Those who coped more easily with the change had been aware of the proposal to establish an Academy when they were appointed, had been used to a lot of change in the past or were excited by the possibilities that the change would bring. However, they too were affected by the uncertainty of the situation and coped with it in different ways. A number like Roger and Gordon looked out specifically for their own interests and how they could either benefit from the change or negotiate their way through it.

Roger began to safeguard himself well before the Academy was announced recognising that change was inevitable in the context in which he worked. Indeed, he actively sought a promotion to protect his position which, in the event, ensured that he was on a protected salary for three years after the Academy opened. Following the announcement about the conversion to Academy status he looked around for other posts but also mentally prepared himself for moving into a new role in the Academy rationalising that he was familiar with the new environment and that he would be comfortable working with his new colleagues. While he recognised the impact of uncertainty on those around him he was able to reconcile himself to his future in the Academy.

Nora recognised that with her background she would be moved to a new role within the secondary phase of the Academy. She indicates that given her age she knew that she could just sit things out if the transition did not turn out well. While not immune to emotional reactions and sensitive to her colleagues' feelings Nora chose to focus on how she would cope with the change. Once she had moved into her new role she dealt with the continuing uncertainty of her position by immersing herself in her work and the classes she had to teach. Getting on with it was the key to managing the uncertainties of working in a new environment just as putting the inevitable move into the wider perspective of a career nearing its end was the key to managing the uncertainty of the future.

The key for both these participants and others seems to have lain in a period of mental preparation for what was to come. They sought to take control and consciously manage their reactions to the uncertainty that surrounded them by ‘*looking out for number 1*’; rationalising what would or could happen, by seeking to establish an emotional detachment or by focussing on the needs of current pupils. While conscious of the turmoil felt by others each of them sought to isolate themselves from the emotional responses of those around them. They each exercised some measure of control over what was happening to them at the same time as recognising the limitations of what they could and couldn’t actually do. Gordon sums up their response:

I mean, of course everybody would like the process to be pain-free or worry-free or whatever.

It’s not any kind of change, any kind of change at all. Again it comes back to uncertainty, the ways, you know, the future is always uncertain. You need to wait and see, or be proactive and get on with it. The whole process, if there had have been some kind of crystal ball, where we’d have been able to be told, you know: “You’ll be here. Your class will be like this,” you know, “the kids will be like this – this is what(I will) need to do,” that would have been great, but ...

Some of the other teachers such as Ryan and Rebecca seem to have weathered the storm without too much trouble. Sensitive to the anxieties of others their belief that a change was needed seemed to act as a life buoy carrying them over the worst ups and downs. However, others continued to struggle with the uncertainties of the situation six months after the Academy opened.

5.2.3 Future roles and responsibilities

While uncertainty was related to different aspects of the process the most pressing cause for concern was in relation to future roles and responsibilities particularly given the rumours and speculation about potential job loss. This related both to the possible need to move to a different location as well as the possibility that teachers may have to teach a different age range with which they were not familiar. This represented a real threat to personal comfort zones particularly for those teachers who had worked in the same environment for

a long time. For primary school teachers who had traditionally worked in what they considered to be a small, safe environment anxiety was largely related to the possibility that they may have to work in a new environment with new colleagues. Secondary teachers suffered less from this uncertainty. Their concerns centred more on who would be appointed to senior posts.

While some colleagues faced little apparent change to their working environment the advent of the Academy certainly posed a threat to well established comfort zones for others. Nora indicates that she was part of a *'nice, tight little staff, very friendly, sociable'*. The strong staff climate is a constant thread throughout Mona's story and Felicity talks about staff being like a family. Strong attachments to their environment by some teachers were reinforced by the fact that many of them had been in the same school for a number of years, in some cases throughout their careers. They were thus familiar with the families, the community, the routines and expectations as well as the idiosyncrasies of leadership and management. The prospect of leaving such a familiar environment and moving into a bigger organisation was significant for some such as Claire and Felicity at both a personal and professional level. Indeed, uncertainty and insecurity in these environments continued into the post opening phase of the Academy as teachers struggled to grasp the new realities that they faced.

The fear of losing jobs or being allocated new roles and responsibilities created various levels of anxiety amongst a number of participants. Inappropriate and inaccurate information such as that described by Nora fuelled rumour and speculation and resulted in a highly emotional staff climate. Felicity describes her reactions and those of her colleagues:

It's just the fear of the unknown. We didn't know what to expect. Nobody knew, basically knew, what was going on, it was fear of jobs. We didn't know whether we would still have our jobs. There were rumours flying thick and fast that a load of people were going to be losing their jobs, support staff, especially, were concerned. We were worried sick. And then there were rumours about the TUPE thing....It was just a fear of the unknown.

For some teachers their very identity was being threatened by the change to Academy status. There was also the need for some to factor in the inevitable loss of status that they were bound to experience as they faced appointments to a new staffing structure which met the Academy's needs.

Teachers existed in a state of uncertainty or '*limbo*' (Rebecca) over a number of months. This resulted, for a few, in mounting anticipation and, for most, in increasing dread about the dramatic change which was to come. Some anticipated desirable outcomes whereas others experienced or, more frequently, reported, anxiety about future deployment, worries about loss of status, disaffection amongst colleagues and low morale. Some teachers were reported as being angry and felt that more was known than they were being told whereas others reported feelings of trepidation, resentment, confusion or shock. That teachers higher up the leadership scale knew where they would be deployed as a result of the outcome of interviews for new posts before the TUPE process was complete and therefore earlier than the main body of teachers led to further disquiet. In some cases it actually led to despair when key members of leadership teams managed to secure leadership posts within the new structure which some felt were unwarranted. The process of waiting to find out whether they would have a job, and if so where, was exacerbated by the protracted timescales involved and the constant changes to the timetable which had been published for the outcomes of the TUPE process with most teachers not finding out information about their future until very late in the summer term before the Academy opened.

5.2.4 The pace of change and communication

The pace of change and the alterations to timescales was a key external variable and made a significant impact on perceptions about the quality of information and the effectiveness of communication in the lead up to the opening of the Academy. Teachers reported that information was not shared soon enough and there was a feeling that information sharing was tiered and that senior staff knew more than the main body of staff.

Indeed, some participants felt that information was filtered by predecessor senior staff and that other teachers in different teams knew more than they did, for example:

I think some of the problem came was --- and I think (name of predecessor school head), the previous head, would like to say that there wasn't information coming through from the Academy. I'm not being sceptical, but I'm not always too sure that we were actually given the right information. I mean, I don't know whose fault that was, but I --- me being cynical I think it was probably from actually (name of predecessor school head) trying to protect her senior leadership team and certain jobs.(Paul)

This was not an isolated reaction. This perception was supported by other participants both in the secondary and primary phases. How information was conveyed by the predecessor school headteachers is raised on several occasions and clearly their role in communicating key information was critical in determining how news was received and how well prepared staff felt to handle what happened and the information they had.

No doubt it was situations like those described above by Paul which contributed to concerns voiced in relation to the lack of available information. This resulted in concerns about a hidden agenda with some teachers expressing the view that any information would have been better than none and would have eased the process. For these teachers communication was characterised by an impersonal approach, ineffective engagement with the predecessor schools, insufficient contact with key people from the project team, lack of consultation, lack of clarity particularly with regard to planning for September and unanswered questions. Further concerns are expressed about the difficulties of seeing how main scale teachers fitted into the new structure, the various unofficial channels of communication that developed and the consequences of ineffective information sharing, for example, the increasing disaffection of particular staff and the mischief making of others.

In contrast some participants (e.g. Ryan) report that communication in the implementation period was open and honest and that clarity was provided wherever possible. They express satisfaction with the official transfer

process and feel that communication in general was appropriate and accept that information could only be shared once it was available. Indeed, one teacher (Roger) suggests that it would have been inappropriate to share information which may have been subject to change implying this in itself could have led to further dissatisfaction and uncertainty.

Of most concern were the protracted timescales in relation to the identification of future roles, responsibilities and class allocation. This was compounded by alterations both to the timescale and alterations to the placements themselves. Job security and future job role featured high on the list of anxieties faced by participants and their colleagues. While some teachers clearly understood that the TUPE process would ensure that they would continue to have a job, it is clear that others did not grasp this or genuinely feared that their job was at risk. It was no wonder then that protracted and frequently altered timescales for communicating this critical information played a significant role in creating the uncertainty which characterised this period. Primary participants in particular talk about the enormous relief they and their colleagues felt when they realised that their future was secure.

Barry articulates a number of the issues outlined above:

It (the Academy) was something that people knew was going to happen. My interpretation was, at the time, that people weren't sure of the timetable. So this was one of the things that people were concerned about. When people discussed how long it would take. ...they felt it was going to be at least two years because they felt it couldn't be done in the timescale and I think lots of ... as it came out and as we went through it lots of people felt that communication didn't happen because the timescale was too compressed so that staff generally felt they'd been left out, weren't told things. There was always a sort of conspiracy theory element to it because lots of people said they're not telling us things that they know because they don't want us to know.

Later in his story he picks up the same theme again

I think that what most people were waiting for was the moment when they were told ... what they were going to do. It's just the not knowing, isn't it? You know, it's like a dentist's waiting room. The thought of what was going to happen is generally much worse than the actual... relief when they found out.

No doubt greater clarity and efficiency with regard to communication and timescales would have resulted in a workforce less perturbed by the transition process. Headteachers who did not follow their own agenda would also have made a significant difference.

This stage of the journey was characterised by an uncertainty which dominated teachers' lives over a considerable period of time. While some teachers understood that significant change of this nature takes time to implement and were able to manage and quell their understandable desire for information and clarity, others were less well equipped to do so and struggled to manage the impact of the various external change variables particularly in relation to the pace and timing of change and the resulting job insecurity. While living with this uncertainty impacted on individuals in different ways, it also contributed to the general staff climate in which the teachers were working. Several participants allude to this. Working as a member of an anxious staff team inevitably produced its own challenges in addition to those presented by the change process itself.

5.3 Understanding and acceptance of change: second stage of the change journey

It might reasonably be assumed that an understanding of the need for change would precede an acceptance of that change. It might also be assumed that acceptance of change and embracing the new opportunities which arise, result from an understanding of its purpose. However, as the analysis which follows shows, the relationship between understanding and acceptance is not as uncomplicated as it might at first appear.

Whether or not an individual accommodates changes which take place is also related to the passage of time, the nature of individual events, an understanding of the implications of a major change process and personal outcomes and experience. Understanding and accepting the change to Academy status were influenced by the

context in which the teachers worked, with some teachers, particularly secondary teachers, indicating that there was a real impetus for change, at least in the beginning. In contrast others, mainly primary, demonstrate varying levels of understanding of the requirement for change and acceptance has been a more gradual and uncomfortable process for some than for others. Understanding and acceptance were also related to the ways in which individuals were able to mediate the impact of the external change variables which affected everyone through the process of change.

5.3.1 The need for change

While fewer than half the participants explicitly articulate the need for change others acknowledge that it was necessary through their comments about the prevailing climate in the predecessor secondary school.

Secondary participants are quite clear that something needed to be done as the current system was not working for either the pupils or the staff. Ryan focuses on the poor standards of achievement, Rebecca on the need to raise aspirations, Paul on the management regime and Jenny on behaviour. Between them they cover each of the key policy reasons for turning failing schools into Academies. They were not alone in believing that it was time for a change as others also felt that pupil behaviour in the secondary school left something to be desired. According to Roger the pupils *'had been getting away with murder for two or three years before the Academy'* and it was his belief that it *'would be a tough job to go and put that right'*. He agrees that things may have been mismanaged in the past but he also emphasises the fact that he *'thinks it is as difficult as it gets'*. He wonders whether the new management had fully appreciated that before they joined the Academy.

Despite feeling that a change was required Ryan nevertheless says that he needed to make an active choice about his own attitude towards the change that was to occur:

Yeah. I think with a change of this nature I have two choices. I could decide to, you know, be difficult, not go along either with doing that but at the end of the day my feelings were that the current system was not working. The pupils were not going last year on headline A to C figures. That was 21%. That's

knowing the sort of children we have – you see that’s not right. So I said ‘Look, it’s not working’. I could either be difficult or I could embrace the change, so having done that it has been positive. Had I not chosen, had I decided that I was clinging on to the old school, I would not have been so positive. I would imagine that, you know, every discussion of this new policy oh here we go ...

His perception that this choice could have gone either way and that there was a need to make a conscious decision about the path that he would take and stick to is distinct from the way in which others experienced this process. Most of them do not appear to have made a choice but were carried along by events and their emotional responses.

While secondary participants positively welcomed the potential improvement offered by the Academy some primary participants had a different reaction. While not enamoured of the proposal some were resigned to it or in Nora’s case came to accept the need for change the more they learned. They do, however, report on less favourable responses amongst their colleagues. Other participants were neither positive nor resigned. They struggled to see the relevance of change for the age group they taught. They came from what they perceived to be a successful primary environment, a strong collegiate atmosphere which valued the needs of learners and were confused by their inclusion in a process which was designed to address the failings of an entirely different age group in an entirely different school. Despite this, and her own concerns about the Academy and its impact, it is only Claire, a primary teacher, from amongst all twelve participants who seems to grasp the reasons for the all age Academy concept:

I’ve been here for nearly 20 years in this one school and I’ve worked in reception, I’ve worked in Year 1 and I’ve worked for a couple of years in Year 4 – so I’ve always seen great hope for the children in reception, and I then found out after years of being in reception, going to Year 4, I found that quite a difficult transition. But I also found it in some way worrying because the children who had been achievers right at the beginning of the system were still the achievers, the people who you thought won’t be able to progress had progressed and the children that you thought: “Oh, well, they’re a bit

immature, they aren't achieving" in reception, or had some sort of behaviour issues, were sadly the same children that had the same issues by the end of the system. So I suppose that's probably some of the thinking behind the academy, that these sorts of things when you're in one system and there's no transition to be made that might be sorted out properly.

Indeed, she expresses this so well she could well have been an advocate for the Academy. The underlying purpose and vision which is clearly articulated by Claire is not repeated in any other story although Nora did come to recognise the lack of progress made in Key Stage 4 by pupils she had previously encountered in Year 6. Even those participants who were highly positive about the Academy saw it only from the perspective of its impact on their own immediate environment, in other words how the Academy could improve the situation for them and the pupils they worked with. There would appear to have been no clear shared understanding among the remaining participants of the purpose of the all age Academy as articulated by the sponsors in their vision statement. While this might have been an issue of considerable importance in relation to their individual understanding of the change that was taking place it did not appear to enhance or impede an individual's acceptance of the change. Other factors seem to have been significantly more influential in this regard.

5.3.2 Acceptance of change

Whether they grasped the underlying purpose of the Academy or not the ability of participants to accept the change was mediated by the context in which they were working. For some teachers (secondary) this resulted in an eagerness to embrace change and for others (primary) a reluctance to even accept that change was necessary.

In discussing the reaction of the secondary teachers to the Academy proposal Nora suggests that there was a 'bring it on' attitude. This initial positive reaction was supported by each of the individual stories told by secondary participants and was the result of two key interrelated factors: the nature of the outgoing 'regime'

and the behaviour and attitude of the pupil body. The story of each secondary participant reveals a lack of confidence in the outgoing senior leadership team and a belief that the systems and processes in place failed to support both the pupils and the staff. The senior leadership team was characterised by self interest, a quick fix mentality which may have resulted in improved results but did little to improve learning and achievement and a lack of follow up when behaviour escalated beyond the class teacher's control. Coupled with what Rebecca describes as an ingrained negativity towards education amongst the pupil body, it is unsurprising that this resulted in a climate where teachers felt vulnerable, unsupported and unable to rely on a whole school approach to teaching and behaviour management. This perpetuated a particular type of pupil culture where pupils felt undervalued and insufficiently challenged either in or beyond the classroom which in turn resulted in behaviour problems. The stated need for a change under these circumstances was therefore understandable as was the initial enthusiasm with which the Academy was greeted. However, it was perhaps this same culture which may have resulted in the subsequent difficulties some staff seemed to experience in acclimatising to a new culture once the Academy was open. New, more rigorous expectations offered a challenge to staff, which while welcomed and understood by some, presented a threat to well established comfort zones for others. Acceptance, therefore, for some of the secondary staff was a short lived affair.

The culture of the school in Mona's story played a powerful role in her reception of events and that of some of her colleagues. Characterised by a strong collegiate staff climate, the prevailing culture of the predecessor school was one of open consultation and shared decision-making where each of the teachers felt they had a stake in the recognised success of the school. It was reported as a school which was self consciously child centred and self congratulatory about the good name it enjoyed in the local community, drawing parents from a large catchment area. The reaction to an externally imposed change and particularly one which was not perceived as necessary received a hostile reception within this climate as it clashed with a well established perception of a successful school. Mona's story, more than any other, describes a staff struggling to understand the reasons why their school had been included within the proposal.

The stories of other participants reveal a culture which was highly parochial in nature. Indeed, Barry explicitly refers to the narrow mindset of teachers in the area as well in the school and how this created negative reactions to change. In a similar vein one of Felicity's first comments relates to the length of time the predecessor headteacher had been at the school and how the staff were like a family. This is reinforced in the language she uses to describe her colleagues and their behaviour. The Academy represented a threat in each case to the security created by familiar environments, people and practices. Limited understanding and acceptance of the need for externally mandated change was almost inevitable under these circumstances.

While some participants indicate that they were either happy with, or resigned to, the change to Academy status from quite an early stage it took others varying amounts of time to come to terms what was happening and why. Some were easily converted while others took longer to be convinced. Jenny and many of her secondary colleagues were eager to move quickly away from things which were not working but did not perhaps appreciate how much they would have to change their practice and move beyond personal comfort zones. Some participants reconciled themselves to the inevitable but maintained an objective stance until they could assess the impact. This is exemplified in the comments from Mona below:

... people, they're very keen to be negative about any sort of change, whereas personally I'm not like that, I kind of, like, I know loads of people did leave the academy, they left to go to different schools, but I kind of wanted to see what it was like and then decide, because I think with education you don't know what you're getting yourself into.

In contrast others are still coming to terms with the reality of the Academy and have still not completely accepted the changes taking place around them six months after it has opened.

5.3.3 Favourable personal outcomes

The favourability of personal or professional outcomes was a critical internal change variable which affected an individual's willingness to embrace what was happening. Perhaps the most striking example of a favourable personal outcome is to be found in Gordon's story. The transition to Academy status offered Gordon the opportunity to make an unexpected but greatly desired leap into a new type of role. He begins his interview by alluding to the fact that his story has less to do with the change to Academy status than with the potential it provided to realise this ambition. He describes choosing to remain in the predecessor school rather than seeking a post elsewhere as a '*gamble*' but one that has paid off. He has been delighted with the outcome but this response had been marred by other conflicting feelings:

I was as pleased as punch when I found out that I was going to (realise my ambition), so ... and a bit guilty....Guilty because I was thinking well I, you know, because at that time I was thinking: 'I've done well out of this,' and I was looking around me and thinking: 'Some people have been shafted is the way they felt and I haven't' so I just felt guilty in case there was smoke or something, and say: Well, I'm alright, I've got exactly what I wanted.

Clearly less favourable outcomes for others detracted from their ability and willingness to embrace the Academy and what it stood for.

It is interesting to note that of twelve participants in this study a number benefited professionally and personally from the transition. Ryan and Nora have both recently been promoted at the time of interview and Barry has moved into a coveted support staff role. However, favourable outcomes were not restricted to the acquisition of new posts. Sarah is enthusiastic about the personal and professional benefits resulting from increased continuous professional development opportunities within a larger, more structured organisation. Other participants are more concerned with the favourable outcomes for pupils and improvements to the support offered to teachers while the prospect of the new build and the promise of new leaders also affects the cognitive responses of a number of participants.

5.3.4 Disposition and prior experience

Individuals' ability to cope with, and therefore accept change, was also mediated by their disposition and their prior experience. Sarah, for example, states that she is very familiar with change and therefore knew that she would be able to cope despite finding the transition process traumatic at first. This self confidence is evident in the stories of others who positively engaged with the opportunities or the difficulties which arose. In each case their experience and disposition affected how they would have responded to any type of change. Ryan was keen to '*earn his stripes*' and does, Roger and Gordon were confident in their ability to find another post while Paul was willing to accept his demotion.

In contrast, the stories of other participants would suggest that their inability to adapt to change was linked to lower self esteem and self confidence. Felicity exemplifies this in talking about the unpaid leadership role she had held in the predecessor school. Under TUPE regulations she could not be considered for a similar role in the Academy and this had clearly made a significant impact on her feelings of self worth. That she dwells on the fact that she was not eligible to apply for a similar post once the Academy opened only serves to reinforce this. Both she and Claire also reflect on feeling undervalued by the new leadership in the Academy. Their sensitivity to this issue is not replicated in the stories of those participants who seem ready to move on.

This difference is further reinforced by the same participants adopting either an optimistic or pessimistic stance towards the future. Ryan can see that things will improve. Sarah welcomes the positive support and is excited about the future. Gordon is keen to work with new colleagues to tackle the difficulties of his new role. Paul, despite his personal circumstances, is determined to be optimistic because he believes it will be the best outcome for the pupils while Roger remains cautiously optimistic. Mona and Nora are beginning to see that things might work out well. On the other hand, while Felicity and Claire say that they believe things will get better in the future they remain ambivalent and do not communicate any real enthusiasm for the future while Jenny seems to have lost all hope and cannot see beyond the difficulties that she is currently facing.

As suggested in the introduction to this section the relationship between understanding of change and acceptance of that change whether at a cognitive or affective level is far from straight forward. While few participants demonstrate a full understanding of the purpose of the all age Academy some are able to accept the changes which are taking place whereas others continue to struggle with the changes they face even after their schools have closed and a new regime is in place. This is evident in the varying approaches and attitudes towards the new realities of the Academy as the same internal change variables which help to mediate an individual's response to external change variables and therefore their acceptance of change also mediate their ability to come to terms with the new realities with which they are faced.

5.4 Coming to terms with new realities: third stage of the change journey

Coming to terms with new realities was experienced in various ways by different participants. New realities included new expectations, new routines, new leaders and in a few cases new working environments and new colleagues. While individuals managed the new experience in different ways they also emphasise different aspects of the new reality within the stories they tell. For some it is the introduction of new practices in relation to teaching and learning, particularly the learning walks, which come to symbolise the move away from previous practice in the predecessor schools, while others focus on the size of the new organisation and the impact of a new corporate mentality, still others on whether their individual expectations have been met. What is clear from all stories, however, is that the new realities represented a break with the past which some have found difficult to negotiate.

5.4.1 New practices in relation to teaching and learning

On first reading it is possible to misinterpret reactions to the learning walks. No one suggests that similar activity did not take place before the Academy was established. Indeed, Nora talks about a previous headteacher and her regular visits to the classroom. It was not therefore the fact that they were a new practice

which initially caused consternation but how this new practice was implemented that made such an impact from the first days that the Academy opened. Learning walks involving a range of new senior leaders were at first seen as nerve wracking and intrusive with teachers feeling a need to prove themselves. The autocratic style of these learning walks no doubt reinforced this perceived need. Nora describes her initial reaction to them:

I didn't like the learning walks at first, purely because I thought they were rude in that they would come in with the clipboard, not speak to me, not speak to the children, and at first I used to be like:

"Yes?" And I found that rude, because I didn't know who they were. I just found it rude. And it's quite funny because the student was taking a lesson in here the other day and I was sat in the corner, and one came in with a clipboard and I just sort of totally ignored her because I'm used to it now. And the student stopped mid-sentence for it, and I thought but he was ignored, like I used to be, and I said:

"Yeah, you just ignore them, they won't speak."

There is no doubt that the learning walks increased pressure on individual staff designed as they were to make judgments about the quality of teaching and learning and increase accountability. As Rebecca says: *'I think we all know that at any point somebody can, you know, come and have a nosey in your classroom, so I think it just makes everybody that little bit more sharp'*. While initially a source of irritation and indeed anxiety for some the learning walks swiftly became accepted by some participants as part of the long term strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning and as Ryan suggests they are beginning to work:

The implementation of the learning walks is bringing about a shift. They are there to support staff but at the same time they're obviously there to give an idea of what's happening in classrooms. I think that's a positive thing really not something again .. some staff if they're teaching feel that if someone's on a learning walk they're being judged rather than, well it may be that, an opportunity to say this is what the requirements are, what can we do, what's actually happening, what are the problems?

It was not just the learning walks which represented this renewed focus on teaching and learning. Mona's story is peppered with references to various learning strategies which have been introduced since the Academy opened. While she is not happy that previous good practice has not been recognised or disseminated across the Academy she does acknowledge and accept the need for an emphasis on improving standards for all pupils.

However new practices have not been welcomed by everybody. The reported responses of other colleagues suggest that their introduction was perceived as a real threat to well established and familiar practice by some teachers. It is perhaps Nora who provides the most illuminating perspective on the reaction of her new secondary colleagues to the new working environment in which they found themselves and at the same time confirms Jenny's perception that many, like her, are now disillusioned. It is Nora's perception that former secondary school staff who were initially highly enthusiastic about the Academy proposal are now experiencing a major culture shock as a result of the new expectations and procedures. She indicates that *'they feel that their workload's getting heavy'* and that *'the pressure is getting to them'* concluding with *'but they're going to have to get used to it, aren't they?'* Those teachers who are demonstrably committed to the needs of learners have embraced the new realities, however tentatively at first, in the belief that they will support an improvement in standards and aspirations. Other teachers, like those mentioned by Nora, are confronted by higher expectations which they are struggling or unwilling to cope with.

5.4.2 The size of the new organisation

While Felicity and Claire refer to the learning walks, their stories place greater emphasis on the size and nature of the new organisation. They reveal frustration and irritation as a direct result of moving from a relatively small primary environment into a more corporate way of working. Being part of a large Academy operating over more than one site has resulted in a level of central control which is unfamiliar and unwelcome and which they are struggling to deal with. This has been experienced in increased bureaucracy especially electronic communication, new cultural requirements, new staffing arrangements and the need to have all decisions

verified by a leader who may not always be immediately accessible. Associated with this is an overriding feeling that too much has been required too quickly, often without adequate notice, and that much of the change is secondary driven and does not take adequate account of the needs of the primary phase.

For Claire, being remote from the ‘*mother ship*’ (i.e. the secondary site which houses the leadership group), reinforces the distance that she feels exists between the needs of the primary age pupils and their teachers and the hierarchy which is orchestrating the new routines and practices.

I think the main issues are we're part of a huge organisation and I think ..., we kind of feel a bit sidelined - I make a point of looking through the newsletter every week but it's like get your magnifying glass out to spot (any of our pupils).

Both she and Felicity talk about feeling undervalued within the big organisation despite the fact that each of them also voices concern about the nature of previous leadership. There is a feeling that everyday courtesies have been discarded, that no-one asks their opinion about things that are going to happen and that there is a general lack of communication. At the same time there are an increasing number of emails presumably designed to improve communication but which are perceived as undue bureaucracy. They are preoccupied with the fact that they have become small cogs in a big, and to their mind unwieldy, corporate machine. They are not used to this and find it uncomfortable, threatening and completely impersonal. Their overriding impression is that they have to follow instructions rather than be actively involved. No sooner do they start to get to grips with new ways of working than they are faced with another new initiative. Changes are taking place at the last minute and the reasons behind decisions are not communicated. As Felicity says ‘*it seems it's just one mad dash to get things done*’. To compound this further it is Claire’s perception that there is an ongoing hidden agenda behind the learning walks and observations. While teachers are used to being monitored as part of normal practice, with new leaders and in this new regulated environment with a more autocratic style of management, it is far more threatening. Experienced along with the addition of new staff, redeployment of

support staff sometimes at short notice and the need to pass things up the chain this is resulting in low morale and high levels of frustration, feelings which are reported by Felicity as being shared by other primary teachers.

5.4.3 Realisation of personal and professional goals

While some teachers are preoccupied with the positive or negative impact of new practice others are more concerned with the impact that the Academy has had on them personally. Gordon, Paul, Barry and Roger had each anticipated different outcomes from the change to the Academy. The third stage of the Academy story they tell dwells on whether or not personal expectations or ambitions have been fulfilled. In Paul's case this includes ambitions that he had for pupils and colleagues. Gordon describes how his gamble has paid off and Barry outlines how he has been able to move away from teaching into what is for him a more fulfilling role. Their pragmatism in the face of a significant change has helped them to steer a clear course through the inevitable choppy waters and at the same time keep their eye firmly fixed on their own goals. With the exception of Paul each of them continues to focus on personal rather than organisational needs or purpose. Only Paul seems concerned with the needs of others rather than self but he too keeps his eye firmly fixed on the future recognising that it will take two or three years for things to settle down.

For Jenny there is no new reality. The promise she had seen for the future has not been realised. Worse, her perception is that things have deteriorated. Pupils are pushing boundaries again after a strict start, the new intake has been influenced by the poor attitudes and behaviour of the older pupils, pupils are not wearing the new uniform, excluded pupils continue to behave badly and sanctions are not working. In short, the problems of pupil behaviour remain.

I think I had these high expectations of it being a lot different () and if they weren't there would be consequences, but when the consequences are detention and then they don't turn up, and it's not passed on, we've sort of seen the same thing as last year, and I think because we thought it was going to be a lot different and then it wasn't, or it started to be back the same, I think, you know, motivation

and things really, really dropped because we envisaged it being a lot different. I think if we knew it was going to be the same we would have been more prepared and it wouldn't have felt as bad as it did.

The underlying expectation within Jenny's story is that somehow new leaders and new systems should automatically have redressed the intransigent issues of the past. While she recognises that this is unrealistic she nevertheless seems unable to cope with the real outcome. It is also interesting to note that her complaints about lack of support from senior staff are in direct contrast to statements made by Rebecca and Ryan who point to significant improvements in this area. Following unrealistically high hopes and significant personal investment in the potential of the Academy the reality has been a major anti-climax and has instilled a deep disillusionment which Jenny is struggling to manage. She contends, as does Paul, that many teachers from the predecessor secondary school are experiencing similar disappointment. While Paul is able to rationalise this and keep it in perspective he believes, and Jenny demonstrates, that others cannot.

Nora's perspective on this issue is rather different. Coming from a different environment and previously thinking of herself as a '*numpty*' in comparison to secondary colleagues, she reflects on the fact that while secondary teachers may have been eager for change they had not appreciated the energy that would be needed or the time it would take to achieve a transformation in practice and outcomes. She suggests that their hopes and expectations had not included the increased workload and additional personal effort that would be required from a leadership team focussed on achieving significant school improvement.

5.4.4 Understanding of the bigger picture

As indicated earlier it is only Claire from amongst all twelve participants who articulates the vision of the all age Academy as a means to secure progression for pupils from the time they start school until the time they finish. This is clearly of less immediate importance for other participants than the impact of the change on them, on those around them and on their daily lives. This gap in the teachers' stories suggests that it was of less

significance than the more personal and collegiate aspects of change. This is also supported by the dearth of comments on the sponsors of the Academy.

The concept of Academies and the bigger picture of educational reform and school improvement within the wider political context receive more attention although some participants focus primarily on either positive or negative impressions gained from the press rather than on why failing schools become Academies. Those who are aware of negative publicity refer to this in passing rather than dwelling on it as a major issue. Any concern seems to centre more on the impact that it might have had on pupils rather than anything else. Other comments are diverse in nature. As has been mentioned previously, only one participant, Jenny, has had any direct experience of an Academy and she speaks of the significant impact of draconian measures on the behaviour of pupils and had anticipated a similar impact when the transition to Academy status took place. Ryan is aware of the differences between individual Academies and Paul recognises their role in the wider agenda of school improvement. It is only Gordon who questions the appropriateness of the Academy solution as a means to secure improvement in this context and expresses discomfort with the political agenda. Given the strength of feeling reported in the press about the Academy solution the participants in this instance show remarkably little interest in the politics of the change process. Only Paul alludes to the fact that it is designed to raise standards in schools which are failing. In conjunction with the apparent lack of understanding or preoccupation with pupil progress as a result of the all age concept the disinterest in the wider political agenda surrounding Academies suggests a workforce either preoccupied with their own future or one which is not actively engaged in educational debate. This issue is discussed more fully in the final chapter.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the key external change variables which impacted on all the teachers as they moved through the change journey of becoming an Academy. The pace and timing of change, the quality of communication and information and concerns about future roles contributed to a period of significant

uncertainty in the first and second stages of the journey. For some this continued into the third stage of the journey as well. The chapter also indicates how individual teachers experienced the same external change variables in different ways which resulted in differing levels of understanding and acceptance of change and their perceptions of new realities, this experience being determined by how internal change variables helped them to mediate the process of change taking place around them. While the full range and complexity of these internal change variables cannot be considered given the limitations of this research, it is clear from self reported internal change variables that for the individual teachers in this study the favourability of personal and professional outcomes and prior experience have clearly played a role in an individual's ability to manage uncertainty, accept change and come to terms with new realities. It is also reasonable to assume that similar internal change variables will support or hinder participants as they embark on the next stages of the change journey.

Chapter 6: Coming to terms with change

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research has been to develop an understanding of teachers' responses to a dramatic change in their working lives, specifically a centrally imposed reform. While there is a significant body of research on the emotional impact of change in organisational life and a growing number of incidental findings related to large scale educational reform (A. Hargreaves: 2004), few studies have been specifically designed to investigate the emotional lives of teachers during a time of significant change and the emotional side of sense making to a large extent still remains a black box (Geisel & Meijers, 2005). Given that the same teachers who were subject to the challenges this reform presented still had to contend with the emotional demands of their job (A. Hargreaves, 1998) it is particularly pertinent to understand how they perceived and experienced such a change and whether they feel that it has been worthwhile. As Goodson (2001) suggests, it is both *'important and appropriate to give personal change a prime place in the analysis of change'* (p 57).

The specific nature and purpose of the reform set alongside the wider educational context in which the teachers were working have been key factors in this research. The closure of the predecessor schools to enable a fresh start as an Academy made an unequivocal and powerful statement about external perceptions of learning and achievement in this context and, by implication, about the teachers who were working there. Already subject to repetitive change (Abrahamson: 2004) and the resulting regulatory and performative framework at a national level, teachers now had to experience another layer of highly intrusive, externally determined change at a local level. The increasing tendency to see restructuring of schools as the solution to problems in schools (A. Hargreaves: *ibid*; Reynolds cited in Gray, 2000) created a further imperative to understand the process from the perspective of those at the 'chalk face'. In developing the research objectives and at each stage of the research process I have remained conscious of the stark contrast between a decision

made behind closed doors by faceless officials in the name of school improvement and the impact of this decision on individuals for whom teaching is already an emotional labour (A. Hargreaves; 2011). The juxtaposition of a rationalist approach to raising standards and the human experience (le mecanique plaque sur le vivant, Bergson: 1924) created a framework for analysis of the literature, the interviewing of participants and analysis of their responses. It has remained at the forefront of my mind as I have considered how to approach the final stage of this thesis. As Gunter, Gunter, Raynor, Butt, Fielding, Lance and Thomas (2007) point out:

What matters is how claims are made for what the changes can do for schools in comparison with how and what those involved experience as the actual change, as they witness and feel it. (p 34)

6.1.1 Research Objectives

While I was clear at the outset that I wanted to understand teachers' responses to this reform, as I outlined in Chapter 1 achieving clarity about my research questions has not been simple. The anticipated richness and complexity of data gathered offered too many opportunities to veer in different directions. As a result it was even more important to establish very clear research objectives to ensure that I made sense of the data and did justice to the participation of the teachers who offered their time and stories as part of the research. On the other hand, I did not want to limit my exploration of the data by creating research questions which were too specific or too narrow. It was therefore only after extensive reflection and re-reading of the associated literature that I determined the research objectives which are restated below, thus maintaining a broad perspective rather than too narrow a focus which may have otherwise resulted.

Research objectives

1. What insight do teachers' stories give us into how individual teachers experience a centrally imposed reform?
2. What are their perceptions of the outcomes of that reform?

The objectives as they were finally conceived provide the framework for the discussion in this chapter and I believe, enable an exploration to be made of what is a highly complex landscape characterised by emotional and cognitive diversity (Zemblyas & Barker; 2007). In the remainder of this chapter I discuss the key findings outlined in Chapter 5 in the light of these research objectives and the literature explored in Chapter 1. I also consider the limitations of the research and implications for both change leaders and teachers in similar situations and outline the contribution to knowledge that I believe this research makes. I then make some recommendations for future research in the field.

The discussion of the findings is divided into two distinct sections each focussing on one of the research objectives. While I divide the discussion into two parts complete separation of the two research objectives is neither possible nor appropriate. Given the retrospective nature of the story telling participants were reflecting back on a sense making process. Their experience of the change process inevitably influenced their perceptions of the outcomes and how they made sense of what happened. Therefore, while it is helpful for the purposes of the discussion to address the research objectives one after the other I do not pretend or seek to suggest that one can realistically be considered independently of the other. Quite the opposite!

Under the heading '*What insight do teachers' stories give us into how individual teachers experience a centrally imposed reform?*' (6.2) I first discuss the external change variables reported and experienced by all of the participants (6.2.1). These are discussed in relation to the literature on organisational and educational change. This section concludes with a discussion of two key internal change variables: the favourability of personal or professional outcomes and prior experience (6.2.2). I then propose that despite the diversity of individual responses reported in Chapter 5 it is nevertheless possible to identify five different types of teacher response. A categorisation of types of response and how it was arrived at is outlined in 6.2.3. In the next section (6.2.4) I then discuss the different interpretations and experiences of the external change variables discussed in 6.2.1 in

relation to these 'types' and propose a number of reasons why each 'type' may have responded differently to the same change journey.

Under the heading '*What are teachers' perceptions of the outcomes of that reform?*'(6.3) I discuss the varied teacher perceptions of the outcomes of the reform process and how these are influenced by the context in which teachers were working, the extent to which reality met expectations and the impact of more personal or internal change variables. I discuss these in relation to perceptions of the new organisation (6.3.1), perceptions of new colleagues and new leaders (6.3.2) and perceptions of new practices (6.3.3). I suggest that a teacher's ability to develop coping mechanisms through the change process had a direct bearing on their perceptions of the outcomes of that process. This is discussed in relation to the 'types' identified in 6.2.3 (6.3.4).

Before concluding the chapter by outlining the contribution which I believe this research makes to academic knowledge(6.5) and the limitations of the research (6.6)I summarise the key findings (6.4) from what has inevitably been a complex exploration of the responses of twelve individuals with very different personalities, backgrounds and prior experience and suggest what lessons can be learned from their experience.

6.2 What insight do teachers' stories give us into how individual teachers experience a centrally imposed reform?

6.2.1 External change variables

Chapter 5 details a number of key external change variables which are identified and experienced by all the participants although they each responded to them in different ways. These external change variables provide the scaffold or plot for the reform story and change journey which is jointly composed by the individual teacher stories, a reform story characterised, at least at first, by uncertainty. The key external change variables act as landmarks within this reform story and include issues relating to communication and information, pace and timing and future roles and job security. These, in turn, are mediated by internal change variables particular to

individuals which relate to the favourability of personal or professional outcomes and prior experience. Each of the external and internal change variables is discussed in relation to the literature on organisational and educational change.

That teachers in this study experienced high levels of uncertainty came as no surprise confirming as it did the findings of other researchers investigating the impact of change in education (e.g. Jeffrey and Woods: 1996; Reio: 2005) and in other organisations (e.g. Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois & Callan, 2004; Paulsen, Callan, Grice, Rooney, Gallois, Jones, Jimmieson & Bordia, 2005). Perhaps equally unsurprising was the fact that this uncertainty was experienced differently by individual participants (Dibella, 2007; Reio, 2005, Smollan, 2006). Thus, some teachers rationalise the experience perhaps playing down their emotional responses more in retrospect than may have been experienced at the time (Glaever, 2009). In contrast, others are still struggling with the perceived loss of power and control (Perryman, 2007) and have suffered at least for a time from bewilderment about their involvement in something they deemed to be irrelevant to their situation. While the same reform event and change journey are perceived in different ways by different teachers the key external change variables which resulted in a general climate of uncertainty are acknowledged by all.

6.2.1a Communication and information

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make sense of something without adequate information or knowledge and the importance of effective communication during times of change has become part of accepted wisdom (Lewis cited in Elving, 2006). While there is clear evidence to suggest that information was made available and was understood by some change recipients it is equally clear from the stories of others that they did not feel they knew enough. So while some teachers (e.g. Ryan) indicate that communication was appropriate, open, honest, and offered when possible, others speak of unanswered questions, no clear source of information, the prevalence of rumour and speculation and a general fear of the unknown.

There are a number of possible explanations for this discrepancy in personal experience. Firstly, and critically, for some teachers the Academy came as something of a shock. While change had been in the air for a while it wasn't this change, it wasn't anticipated that it would happen so quickly and there was a lack of understanding amongst some as to why their school was involved. Individual teachers particularly in the primary phase were thus reeling from the impact of an unanticipated event which was so momentous it may have been difficult, at least at first, to absorb some of the information that was offered. So while some teachers, for example, were reassured by communication about the TUPE process which explained that they would still have a job in the Academy, others allowed panic to take over, listened to rumours and became anxious that they might lose their jobs. They experienced trauma and the resulting intense emotions which are similar to those reported by Jeffrey and Woods (1996) as a result of the imposition of the regulatory OFSTED inspection.

Secondly, while the key motive for change (unacceptably low standards) was fully understood and appreciated by secondary teachers it was inevitable that primary teachers did not share the same perspective on the issue especially when they felt, rightly or wrongly, that their school was already successful. This supports findings by Grimmett et al (2008) that teachers' experiences of change are tempered and shaped by local pedagogical concerns. Quite simply the primary teachers could not identify with the reasons for the change and were therefore neither ready for it (Holt el, 2007) nor committed to it (Jaros, 2010). Under these circumstances it is likely that information about the sponsor's vision for the all age Academy would not have seemed as relevant. Thus, information on this subject may not have been heard or may even have been dismissed as these teachers were more preoccupied with grappling with the fact that they were involved in something that they could not understand. Equally, secondary teachers were so preoccupied with the need for change that the all age concept and its purpose also seem to have escaped them.

Lastly, a number of teachers felt particularly threatened by the change to Academy status. Of immediate concern to them was the very information that could not be shared in the early stages of the process, namely

the nature of their future role and responsibilities. Therefore it was not necessarily the quality of communication that created concern but the personal relevance of the information being communicated. The perception that there would be a drastic move from the known to the unknown (Coughlan, 2007) created a more intense need for information and resulted in heightened sensitivity when teachers felt it was not available (Bovey & Hede; 2001a & b). For people whose daily lives involve the exercise of control in their classrooms, who plan and manage learning, who know what they want to do, when and how, not having access to information which they believed they needed was extremely debilitating. The removal of this locus of control left some teachers feeling vulnerable, exposed and helpless (Kelchtermans, 1996; Lasky, 2005) and contributed to the erosion of their personal security and as a result their professional autonomy (Storey, 2007).

Professional rather than personal concerns are also raised about the quality of communication by a number of participants particularly with regard to the lack of planning and information for the following September when the Academy was due to open. Teachers who were concerned for their own future and who were subject to a dramatic, externally imposed and managed change process nevertheless maintained their professional concerns and caring attitudes towards their pupils (Acker, 1992; Noddings, 1992; O'Connor, 2006; Sutton & Wheatly, 2003) and were anxious that more careful preparation for their learning had not taken place. This reflects findings by Glaever and Helleso (2010) in another caring profession where nurses voiced significant concern about the ways in which the management of change impacted on the quality of their work. Whether the leaders in the predecessor schools were as concerned is questionable and their role vis a vis communication should not be underestimated. Subject to the same external change process the headteachers were, in many ways, more vulnerable than teachers not least because in at least one instance the leader may have been held responsible for the low standards resulting in the need for an Academy in the first place. They would have known that a new management structure for an all age Academy would be unlikely to require them as headteachers and that the sponsors would impose a new staffing structure for the organisation. These headteachers and senior leaders who were caught in the same cycle of uncertainty as other staff also

represented the main means of communication for teachers in the early stages of the process. The information shared with teachers was therefore mediated by their disposition, their vulnerabilities and their professional integrity. Some teachers recognised the role that headteachers had to play in the quality and accuracy of information that was shared and indeed some voice their concerns explicitly in the interviews. They report that information was communicated differently in each of the schools and this will have inevitably contributed to a febrile climate across the school community, fuelled rumours and speculation and heightened uncertainty amongst teachers. Concerns about a hidden agenda under circumstances such as these, with information shared differently in different contexts, none of them directly managed by the change agent, were inevitable as was the resulting impact on the change recipients.

6.2.1b Pace and timing

Although the issues of pace and timing are not key features in the literature on educational change these findings support Smollan's (2006) proposition and the findings of Smollan et al (2010) that cognitive responses are mediated by the perceived pace and timing of change. They were clearly a significant variable for all the teachers in this study. The speed with which events unfolded was a phenomenon reported by all participants, even those who positively embraced the Academy and what it stood for. Prior knowledge that change was on the horizon did not mediate the impact of this pace not least because any previously mooted change had been ill defined and variously understood. Nor was length of service a determining factor in perceptions of speed. Ryan, a teacher relatively new to the area is as vocal on the issue as, for example, Nora and Felicity both of whom who have much longer service. However, whilst Ryan, Roger, Sarah and Rebecca highlight the issue of speed in retrospect they raise it as an observation rather than a cause for concern. In contrast others (e.g. Mona and Felicity) feel that events not only unfolded swiftly but also that the pace accelerated, that everything was rushed and that there was no time for consultation. Mirroring the findings of Smollan et al (2010) this resulted in increased levels of anxiety for some participants.

Whether or not changes took place with undue haste, some of the teachers feel that they had insufficient time to make sense of the significant change taking place around them. That they were not active participants in the process reinforced the feeling that there was inadequate information (Amiot et al, 2006; Holt et al, 2007) and contributed to a perceived lack of control (Perryman, 2007). The speed with which events rolled out caused a shift in equilibrium which resulted in the perception amongst some teachers that there was simply not enough time to get everything done. Teachers depict a picture of a runaway vehicle hurtling towards September with no-one at the wheel who knew what they were doing or where they were going. Smollan et al (ibid) argue that how we experience time is subjective and that this in turn influences individual responses regardless of other variables. That the pace of change is recognised by the likes of Ryan and Roger but did not heighten their emotional responses, yet this was patently not the case for others who appear more sensitive to the pressures created by the real or imagined pace, gives weight to this theory.

While the overall pace of change is perceived to have been rapid the timing of information regarding future roles and the allocation of future classes is not deemed to have been rapid enough. This is a critical variable for a number of teachers. That timescales for sharing this information were promised but not realised, not just once but on several occasions, gives rise to vehement reactions and is the closest any of the participant group come to expressing anger. They felt let down by the constantly altering timescales which to their mind took no account of the sensitivities of their situation. More than one teacher indicates how difficult it was to watch senior leaders appointed to the new staffing structure while they had to sit and wait. Likened by Barry to a dentist's waiting room it is clear that even the knowledge of an unfavourable outcome would have been preferable to the agony of waiting. Varying degrees of tolerance amongst individuals to this waiting period meant that some coped significantly better than others during this time. The combination of waiting and lack of control was deeply felt by a few teachers and made an impact on their concept of identity (Glaever & Heslleso, 2010). While they knew and understood their role in the predecessor school they were acutely aware that this role might change and could be very different in the new organisation. This was perceived by many to

be unfair (Smollan & Mathney, 2003) and resulted in frustrations as decisions regarding their future were firmly in the hands of others.

6.2.1c Job security

It is well documented in the literature on organisational change that a fear of job loss and/or change of role is prevalent during times of organisational restructuring or mergers (e.g. Oreg, 2006; Paulsen et al, 2005). It was no different under these circumstances despite explicit reassurances given but clearly not heard, understood or believed, about the TUPE process. A new staffing structure which required the appointment of senior leaders before there was clarity for the main body of teachers reinforced the belief that teachers were seen as part of the problem (Hopkins & Levin, 2000). Gewirtz (2002) contends that there are three separate components to the insecurity experienced by change recipients during this time. The first relates to a recurring theme in this study, that the same issue is perceived differently by different teachers in the process, the second to a general uncertainty about job role and the future, and the third, to the pressing question 'will I still have a job once this is finished?' It is interesting to note that despite reported clarity about the TUPE process (recounted by both Ryan and Roger) each of these components is evident amongst the participant group. It would seem that fear of the unknown was so intense that individual teachers were selective in what they heard and understood. Isabella (cited in Klarner et al, 2011) describes change as a 'trigger event' which stirs up emotions. For some teachers fear, anxiety, concern for the future and anger resulting from this powerful and unexpected trigger event seemed to cloud other senses and impair cognitive reasoning resulting in the mishearing or misinterpretation of messages and information. Combined with the impact of other external change variables this heightened sensitivity and exacerbated the perceived lack of control and increased yet further the hunger for information.

6.2.2 Internal change variables

Only two internal change variables are self reported by participants in this study. This is not to suggest that others, as suggested by Vakola et al (2004) amongst others, did not exist simply that they were not self reported. A more in-depth, focussed study would be required to determine what other personal factors or internal change variables mediated the impact of external change variables during this change journey. However, it is evident even from the small number of self reported internal change variables that these impacted on an individual teacher's experience of change in this context.

6.2.2a Relevance and favourability of personal and professional outcomes

For some teachers there is no doubt that favourable personal outcomes played a significant part in their ability to accommodate the change to Academy status. Personal goals, whether anticipated or realised, exerted a powerful influence on a number of individuals. Equally, the perceived relevance of seeking to transform a failing school was significant for others. When the proposed change was deemed to be consistent with neither self interest nor professional values (Dibella; 2007; Smollan: 2006) teachers struggled more in the battle to overcome uncertainty. Goal relevance and the favourability of personal outcomes were seen from different perspectives. Some teachers saw, and grasped, the opportunity for personal advancement or professional development; others appreciated the opportunity the Academy afforded for an improvement in standards; yet others failed to see the relevance of the Academy to their situation. In developing their four stage cognitive-emotional model of individuals' reactions to planned organisational change Lui and Perrewé (2005) propose that goal relevance and goal congruence form part of the primary appraisal or first stage in a change process. Mirroring this finding, a number of individual teachers instinctively sought to understand how the change would impact on them as individuals and how it would impact on their professional environment and most importantly on the pupils that they taught and cared about (Acker, 1992; Noddings, 1992; Sutton and Wheatley, 2003).

Given their personal experience of the difficulties in the predecessor secondary school and the impact this had on students secondary teachers embraced the change from an organisation they perceived to be failing to one which offered hope for the future. The Academy proposal was thus entirely congruent with their goals for student achievement and raising aspirations (A. Hargreaves, 1998). In some cases it was also entirely congruent with their desire to work in an improved environment. In direct contrast, primary teachers struggled to identify the relevance of the Academy proposal. From their perspective there was no logic for including their school and their pupils in a solution designed to fix the problems of another school and another age group. There were therefore quite distinct responses from teachers in the two phases: one of anticipation and hope, the other highly defensive and which perceived the change as a threat to professional identity. Although congruence with professional values and aspirations clearly played a significant role in primary appraisal of this new situation it was, however, not significantly influential on its own to determine an individual's ability to cope.

That the favourability of personal outcomes played a significant role (Holt et al, 2007; Smollan, 2006) for some teachers is apparent in their stories. It is a key thread in Gordon's story and in Barry's and despite other expressed concerns enabled them to emerge with new identities in the new structure. The anticipation of a favourable outcome whether this was a new role, greater personal well being as a result of improved student behaviour or the prospect of being able to work in a new build provided teachers with a positive affective frame (Hodgen & Askew, 2007) at a key point in the transition process and enabled them to develop coping strategies. But what happens when initial goal congruence or anticipated favourable outcomes are not realised? Jenny provides a stark example of the possible impact. The perceived relevance and the potential of improved student behaviour as a favourable personal outcome enabled her to cope with the confusion and uncertainty of the initial stages of the change process. However, her disappointment with the outcome was such that, despite coping in what was perhaps the most difficult period, she quickly became disillusioned once the Academy opened. Despite initial identification with the proposed change, failure to realise the anticipated

potential was perhaps more devastating than lack of engagement in the first place. On the other hand, Mona is beginning to identify with the new practices which are congruent with her professional goals despite significant misgivings at the outset. Congruence with personal or professional goals at the beginning of the process was not as significant as goal congruence with the outcomes. The renewed focus on teaching and learning and pupil achievement which is fully congruent with Mona's professional goals has enabled her to progress beyond her former defensive response and engage with the potential that the Academy offers. While reactions are different in each case they do support the findings of Klarner et al (2011) that different events trigger different reactions at different times.

6.2.2b Prior experience

As Paechter (2002) notes, no teacher came to the reform process as a blank slate. Each participant brought to bear their prior experience and attitudes developed as a result of that experience (Freidrickson, 2000; Hall & Noyes, 2009) which, in turn, was also shaped by the context and culture of the environment in which they had previously been working. These represented important internal change variables which contributed to an individual's emotional and cognitive makeup and mediated their appraisal of the reform and how it was managed. Thus Nora reports that part of her ability to cope resulted from her maturity and her personal experience outside school whereas Jenny's naivety and lack of experience were evident through the unrealistic expectations that she held about the speed and nature of the change. That the culture of the predecessor school also played a significant role is evident in Mona's story. Six months after the Academy opened she is still talking about how 'we' do things in 'our' school. Despite her changing perception of the Academy, she has still not relinquished aspects of the culture of her former school and her perspective continues to be coloured by how things had been before. While the former school's culture has exercised a positive influence on her perceptions of the outcomes of change, the same culture had led to an initial defensive reaction.

6.2.3 Creating a categorisation of types of response

The stories of individual participants are characterised by cognitive and emotional diversity (Zemblyas & Barker, 2007) and result in a complex fabric of varying levels of understanding, emotions and behaviours. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify similarities between individual responses. While recounted in different ways each story is structured around three key dimensions: personal feelings and responses to events prior to the opening of the Academy, personal feelings and responses at the time the stories are told and personal expectations about the purpose and potential of the Academy as an agent of change. Analysis of the stories against each of these dimensions led to the development of a categorisation comprising five discrete ‘types’ of respondent or five patterns of response (Sansone & Thoman, 2005). While the creation of a categorisation from twelve participants inevitably results in small numbers in each category it does nevertheless provide a means of discriminating between responses and enables me to offer a tentative hypothesis about various responses to the external change variables which emerged through cross case analysis and which are discussed later in this chapter (6.2.4). While each participant gives different weight to the stages before and after the Academy opened each story conveys clear messages about the transition process, its impact and the storyteller’s position in relation to these. The ‘types’ identified are:

- The **believers**: those teachers whose original enthusiasm for or optimism about the Academy is sustained
- The **converts**: Those teachers who were originally sceptical or negative about the Academy but who come to appreciate its potential
- The **ambivalent**: those teachers who demonstrate mixed feelings about the Academy and are still struggling to come to terms with the process and the outcomes
- The **pragmatists**: those teachers who accepted that the Academy was going to happen and are making the best of it, taking advantage of personal opportunities wherever possible
- The **disillusioned**: those teachers whose original high expectations have not been realised

These categories are not offered as typecasts or stereotypes but as descriptors which ‘fit’ the groups of teachers at the given point in time at which their stories are told. While there are inevitably variations within each of the categories the following paragraphs offer an outline of the key characteristics associated with each.

The believers

(Ryan, Sarah, Rebecca)

The **believers** are characterised by a passion for teaching and learning and a commitment to raising the achievement and aspirations of learners and securing school improvement. In the case of two participants this also involved an active decision to work with students in a challenging context. Their stories are highly learner focussed and articulate the opportunities and the potential that the Academy offers. This is demonstrated by Rebecca:

But, yeah, I have looked on it as being something completely positive, because the culture of the area and the culture of the school does have to change, so, you know, if an Academy can achieve that then it can only be better for the pupils which is why we’re all here, so. ...I’ve just found that there’s this just ingrained attitude from the kids of just having a negativity towards school and towards education. But we need to change it so that, you know, kids can realise that there is a wider world out there that they can have access to, but they need skills and, you know, some sort of qualification to have access to it.

The **believers** recognise the value of new routines and procedures, acknowledging that these are both supportive and designed to ensure accountability. Furthermore they indicate that these new procedures are making a positive impact. While enthusiastic about current progress and the future each of the **believers** is also realistic about the difficulties that have been, and will continue to be, faced as the Academy becomes established. While concerned with the particular issues which face learners and colleagues they are also able to relate this to a bigger picture. They are neither naive nor daunted by the prospect of change, recognising the potential that the Academy offers pupils and professionals keen to develop their skills and expertise.

The converts

(Mona, Nora)

Like the **believers**, the **converts** are highly learner focussed. Their stories give prominence to the needs of learners and how these should be addressed. The stories are also characterised by a high level of commitment to their colleagues and strong associations with the predecessor school. That they had previously worked at a school which had received public recognition by OFSTED, parents and the Local Authority influenced their initial perspective on the Academy. While they demonstrate empathy for their colleagues, who they perceive as being stressed and anxious, they maintain a level of emotional detachment that helps to establish a distance between them and the staff climate in which they work. One participant attributes this detachment to her age, the other to her personality. Both participants note the difficulties which have resulted from the Academy process both before and after opening but are becoming acclimatised to their new situation and are beginning to recognise the benefits of working within a new organisational structure.

Because everything is going to be different – the numbers and the way people work. I think a bit of consideration has been kind of given for that. But personally I've seen it improve. I've not seen it deteriorate. And I think it's --- I think next year will be a lot better because when we start in September everyone will know what they're doing, touch wood! They'll know their roles and know where they're going. (Mona)

Despite experiencing similar concerns as other teachers the **converts** have made the cognitive and emotional transition to a new educational regime.

The ambivalent

(Felicity, Claire)

The stories of the **ambivalent** are punctuated by contradictions in relation to both the before and after aspects of the Academy process. Positive aspects of life in the predecessor school are celebrated but difficulties are

also surfaced. A similar pattern is apparent following the opening of the Academy although the primary focus remains on current frustrations rather than positive outcomes. Both participants acknowledge the benefits the Academy can bring in the long term for learners and for the community. However, irritation with new systems and procedures, new cultural requirements and a perceived lack of control dominate the stories told. Emphasis is placed on the value of things lost and the difficulties of new staffing arrangements and interactions and yet some specific improvements are also highlighted. A picture is painted of mounting pressure and declining staff morale and yet key new leaders are valued and the potential of the future recognised. Participants are at pains to point out that they are not negative but they are clearly under stress and express anxiety about the impact of changed circumstances on the staff around them.

The pragmatists

(Gordon, Paul, Roger)

The **pragmatists** are critical of various aspects of the Academy process and are aware of both current shortcomings and future challenges. At the same time they offer explanations for what has happened and identify some positives which have resulted since the Academy opened. They describe themselves in various different ways as 'getting on with it' and demonstrate an ability to cope with the circumstances that they are faced with. Their stories are characterised by high levels of self interest and self knowledge and complemented by realistic expectations about the personal outcomes they might or might not enjoy. Each of them got either what they wanted or what they expected out of the process. While empathetic towards their colleagues' responses they remain emotionally detached from the stress and anxiety of others, maintaining a clear objectivity about the process and its impact.

The disillusioned

(Jenny)

While only one participant falls into this category it is nevertheless key to understanding the perceived responses of other teachers particularly those who previously worked in the predecessor secondary school. Characterised by naive and unrealistically high expectations, the **disillusioned** anticipated a transformation in the behaviour and attitude of students. Prior experience of another Academy where she believed a 'transformation' had taken place led to unrealistic expectations about the time involved in changing attitudes and behaviours and successfully implementing new systems. Disappointment rapidly turned to disillusionment after an initial honeymoon period where student behaviour did seem to improve. However, her perception is that this was not sustained. The needs of self and other teachers are dominant rather than the needs of the students or the bigger picture of school improvement. She does not seem to appreciate that change takes time and is fraught with ups and downs.

There is no suggestion that these might be the only categories which could be identified from among the whole teacher group involved in the Academy process. Indeed, I was surprised that a **disaffected**, a **distressed** or even a **militant** (Berkovich, 2011) category did not emerge although the first two were reported by participants. Other stories could well have resulted in the identification of yet further categories applying the same three constructs. Furthermore, it is recognised that these categories themselves capture no more than the current perspectives of the sample group at a particular point in time and that these may change as further events unfold either reinforcing current perspectives or, as in the case of the **converts** and the **disillusioned**, leading to a change in perspective.

The types identified above are largely congruent with the findings of other researchers although the teachers in this study did not display quite such a wide range of emotions as those described in other studies (e.g. Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). That teachers and others involved in change experience highly positive responses has been identified in the past (Smollans, 2006). Indeed Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001) report feelings of exhilaration as a result of change and Oplatka (2006) describes teachers undergoing a process of self renewal,

both indicating positive feelings that exceed those described by the **believers** in this study. The reaction of the **believers** and the passion with which they discuss the potential of the Academy seems to support A.Hargreaves' (1998) view that some teachers positively welcome change. Mixed responses (e.g. Kiefer cited in Glaever, 2009; Smollans, *ibid*) are also a common feature in the literature. As Piderit (2000) suggests changes which are neither consistently positive nor consistently negative are potentially the most prevalent type of response (p 783). Furthermore positive and negative emotions can often be experienced simultaneously. This is entirely congruent with the description of the **ambivalent** offered here.

It is evident that the passage of time is also a key factor in relation to teacher responses with some 'types' (the **converts**) requiring more time to come to terms with events than others (the **believers** and the **pragmatists**), with still others (the **disillusioned** and the **ambivalent**) not having reached that point at the time of interview. The processing of new information and circumstances required a longer period of reflection and to some extent evidence that the change would prove to be valuable. On the other hand the **believers** were able to assimilate the implications of the change process more quickly, anticipating the benefits of the change to come before they had hard and fast information about its impact. The **pragmatists** also seemed to accommodate the change quite readily perhaps in part because they consciously and, as a matter of priority, placed personal considerations at the top of their agenda and did not allow other considerations to conflate their judgement.

With regard to those who continue to struggle with the change it is possible that interviews with the **ambivalent** have come too early in the process of emergence (Perlam & Takacs cited in Vakola et al, 2004) and they simply require more time to reconcile their emotions and cognition. Glaever (2009 p 420) points out that organisational change is likely to be interpreted as more or less significant, at different times of the change process and hence that different emotional experiences may emerge as change unfolds. This could explain why the **ambivalent** and the **disillusioned** have not emerged from the emotional trauma of the change process at the time of interview. Equally, it is possible that they and the **disillusioned** may have established such

impenetrable defences against the change (Vince & Broussine, 1998) that they will not emerge at all and will continue to be baffled by their emotional reactions. This confirms Sansome and Thoman's (2005) observations about the dynamic role played by emotions over time in relation to learning. While a change of this nature is not the formal learning setting on which Sansome and Thoman's observations were based the impact of the changes did indeed involve a learning process for the teachers involved as they came to terms both with the new situation they faced and how they felt about it.

Jenny (*the disillusioned*) is the only example of a teacher whose overall response is negative but this does not seem to be typical of negative responses reported in the literature. While concerns are raised by all participants the highly negative responses that may have resulted in a *disaffected* or *distressed* type are not self reported by any. Resistance to change (Bovey & Hede, 2001a), depression (Eriksson, 2002) stress (Carlyle & Woods, 2002; Kyriacou, 2001; Trotman & Woods, 2000), anxiety (Blackmore, 1994) and even guilt (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991) may have been features of a number of stories but they do not dominate any story to the extent that they define the teacher's overall response and therefore identification as a type. There are indications that interviews with other teachers may have revealed a *disaffected* and *distressed* type but further research would be needed to substantiate this. It is also feasible that the reported prevalence of negative responses amongst colleagues was no more than a perception of the teacher participants and that self reported stories from those colleagues may not have led to identification of these types either.

The *pragmatists* represent the most interesting finding in this categorisation. In his review of research into emotional responses to change Smollan (2006) identifies four types of responses to change: those which are positive, those which are negative, those which are mixed and those which are neutral. While the *pragmatists* do not fall into any of the former categories nor do they fall into the neutral category. Bacharach (cited in Smollan, *ibid*) suggests that change has little impact on employees who are neutral, that they demonstrate limited emotional arousal and that they are likely to be characterised by submissive collaboration. While the

pragmatists certainly managed their feelings both during the time of change and in the re-telling of their stories this does not constitute limited emotional arousal and they were certainly not submissive. On the contrary, both Gordon and Barry, for example, actively capitalised on the opportunities that the change offered. If anything the **pragmatists** are defined by a particular type of self knowledge, their ability to weigh up their personal circumstances in the light of change and act accordingly. There are alternative explanations. Shapiro (2009) argues that teachers have become used to hiding their emotions because they might be deemed to be a threat to the constructed teacher identity which determines how teachers should behave and react. The **pragmatists** could simply have become accustomed to denying how they feel or keeping their emotions hidden (Goleman, 1996; Hopfl & Linstead, 1997). Given that all the **pragmatists** are male Paechter's (2003) argument that men's skills are more closely aligned with their personal and professional identity could offer an alternative explanation for the focus that each of the **pragmatists** has on their role in the new Academy.

A.Hargreaves (2005) offers some evidence that willingness to change decreases with age and that younger teachers are more amenable and receptive to change than older colleagues. While the **ambivalent** might provide some support for this my findings are contradictory. Nora (a **convert**) is a veteran teacher but has been energised by the enhanced self understanding that she gained from the process of change (Darby, 2009), whereas Jenny (the **disillusioned**), fresh out of her NQT year, is still struggling to come to terms with the realities and impact of her new situation. Equally, this study provides no support for Paechter's (2003) argument that female teachers are more likely than their male counterparts to be comfortable with change. It is the male teachers in this study who are the **pragmatists** and Ryan, the only other male, is a **believer**. It is the female teachers (the **ambivalent** and the **disillusioned**) who seem most uncomfortable with the changes that have taken place although as noted above Nora and Mona buck this trend.

6.2.4 Creating an emotional space or affective frame

While the change to Academy status might be seen as a single change process by an outsider, as the stories of the twelve participants show it was experienced very differently by individual teachers. At one and the same time it was both a shared and a unique experience. That it was shared is evident through the identification of commonly identified external change variables discussed above. It was unique in that personal responses had to be endured and managed alone. Some of the participants coped with the isolation this created better than others.

The key motive for the change to Academy status was to secure school improvement and raise standards and yet not one of the teachers who would be instrumental in securing this improvement was involved as an active participant in the process. Teachers were kept at one or even two removes, were completely uninvolved and knowingly disempowered by the very nature of the process. This constantly reinforced both the feeling of being 'done to' and the knowledge that they could have no impact on the outcomes (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). No doubt it also reinforced the belief that the teaching force was actually part of the problem that needed to be resolved. Like nationally imposed change programmes (e.g. OFSTED inspections and threshold assessment) the imposed nature of the change emanating from decisions made within government offices also resulted in a climate of low morale (Day, 2004), unenthusiastic acceptance (Hall and Noyes, 2009), confusion, anomie, anxiety (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996) and declining professional autonomy (Day et al, 2007). Mahoney et al (2004) found that the way such changes are managed impacts on the degree to which teachers feel exposed and vulnerable. In this instance the change process was, of necessity, managed by external change agents implementing the same measures in the same way regardless of individual context or culture and yet some teachers still managed the impact of the change better than others. At the time of interview certain types of teachers (the *believers*, the *pragmatists* and the *converts*) have emerged from the uncertainty and turmoil of the change process and are ready to confront the next challenge. Others (the *ambivalent* and the *disillusioned*) are still struggling to come to terms not only with what has happened but what is happening.

A. Hargreaves (2001) defines '*emotional geographies*' as '*the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help to create, configure and colour the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other*' (p508). Building on this concept of '*emotional geographies*' Zembylas (2005) suggests that teachers need to find or create '*spaces for coping*' in order to examine previously held beliefs about an organisation and their place within it and hence come to terms with change. They describe these *spaces for coping* as spaces which emerge through the enactment of practices (Spillane et al, 2002) that attempt to deal with educational reform in terms of awareness, feeling, and relating. Under normal circumstances a good leader will seek to support their staff in understanding new situations and the successful implementation of change through training, support and coaching (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). Clearly, this was not possible in this instance. The management and nature of this externally imposed change provided no room for school leaders to create opportunities for contemplation and reflection, nor were they able to actively involve their staff in shaping the vision for change or in determining the means of making the vision operational. Not only was it the sponsors' vision but, according to a number of participants some of the leaders were more interested in their own position and that of their senior teams than in the rest of their staff.

Despite the absence of support from their leaders, some teachers, namely the **believers**, the **pragmatists** and the **converts**, found ways of creating their own personal space, thus freeing themselves from the maelstrom of emotions that they perceived to be experienced by others and managing any negative emotions they experienced themselves. They appraised the new situation with which they were faced and reached a judgement about its significance in respect of their own personal and professional concerns. This, in turn, resulted in a particular action tendency (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Wade & Jarvis cited in Bovey & Hede, 2001a), in this instance establishing an emotional distance between themselves and others. In so doing these teachers were able to take stock of what was happening to their schools, to the organisation and to themselves

and determine how they would cope with the change that was taking place (Lazarus cited in Liu & Perrewew; 2005).

This makes the process sound like something which was rational and carefully considered where the teachers weighed up the pros and cons and then made an active decision about how to respond. Indeed this is exactly what Ryan indicates he did. However, he is the only participant who articulates the process in this way. If, on the other hand, the initial appraisal of the new situation is considered in the light of Hoschild's (1990) definition of emotion the appraisal of the new situation was a key element in an emotional response which in turn resulted in or accompanied other physiological and cognitive responses. How this initial event was appraised will have resulted in varying states of arousal, differing brain activation and subjective feelings and different cognitive reasoning at either a conscious or unconscious level (Wade & Jarvis cited in Bovis & Hede, 2001a). More simply expressed when each individual teacher was faced with the new situation they each responded in completely different ways AND on a number of different levels depending on their cognitive and emotional make up. For some this process resulted in the ability to create a space for coping, for others it did not. The space that some teachers managed to carve out for themselves enabled them to reflect on their own situation and determine how they might exert some level of control over their present and their future. Nora drew on past experience and made a conscious decision to wait things out if necessary. Ryan determined that he would prove himself. Gordon sought to realise his dream of moving into a new role. In each case those participants who coped (nine of the twelve) forged their own personal strategic response to the situation they faced and, to a greater or lesser extent, protected themselves from the emotional turbulence around them and any inner turmoil they that felt.

Each of the *believers*, the *pragmatists* and the *converts* describes a highly emotional climate amongst their colleagues who they refer to as anxious, distressed, resentful and angry. However they do not talk about their own reactions in the same emotive terms despite acknowledging that they experienced the same levels of

uncertainty about the future and, in some instances, being highly critical about aspects of the change process. Instead, in the retelling of their stories they consciously distinguish their reactions from those of their colleagues. Barry describes himself as an outsider and reflects on the parochial culture that he had joined. Mona explicitly explains that she keeps her home and school life separate and does not dwell on matters related to work when she is not there. Paul seeks to rise above the anxieties of his colleagues by looking out for them and Gordon makes it clear that certain matters were not for discussion with colleagues and that he had a laugh and a joke with them rather than discuss personal concerns. This emotional detachment or '*assumed objectivity*' is a reflection of the ways in which each of these participants created a protective bubble both to manage their own feelings and to insulate themselves from the emotions of others. This protective bubble provided them with the means to reflect on and formulate their own strategy for emerging from the challenges of change. As A. Hargreaves (2001) suggests, these teachers actively constructed a particular '*emotional geography*' which enabled them to manage both their cognitive and emotional responses. They created '*zones of enactment*' in which they noticed, construed, constructed and finally operationalised the reform taking place (Spillane, Reiser & Tood, 2002)

In contrast, the stories of those who did not cope (the ***ambivalent*** and the ***disillusioned***) convey all too clearly that have they been, and remain, on an emotional roller coaster. In the case of Jenny (the ***disillusioned***) this has included peaks as well as troughs. In contrast to the ***believers***, the ***pragmatists*** and the ***converts***, their stories closely align their own reactions with those of their colleagues. Jenny, Felicity and Claire all articulate an awareness of the shared unhappiness or distress of other colleagues. The emotional responses of these 'types' to the change are in stark contrast to their cognitive responses as each also demonstrates an appreciation that things can, or will, improve. They have struggled with forming a new self identity and making sense of the change around them and cannot achieve what Geijssel and Meijers (2005) refer to as '*professional identity learning*'. While each of them understands that things can, or should, improve in the future Jenny, Felicity and Claire do not seem able to achieve the same goal as the other participants. For one reason or another, they

have not succeeded in creating the *space for coping* (ibid) or the *affective frame* (Hodgen & Askew, 2007) which would enable them to construct a fresh understanding of their place within the new organisation. Instead, they remain stuck (Ousten, 2003) and continue to suffer from ambivalence or disillusionment at the time of the interviews. Emotion for this group of teachers has exerted significantly more influence on their ability to navigate the waves of change than cognition (Shapiro, 2009). Jenny states very clearly that she does not understand why this is the case while Claire demonstrates a clear understanding of the vision and purpose of the Academy and yet still fails to penetrate the barrier between cognition and emotion. She, Jenny and Felicity have not managed to achieve what Fineman (1997) refers to as '*cogmotion*' when the emotions and cognition are in balance and enable new learning to take place (Frijda, 2000; A. Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996).

As Zembylas and Barker suggest (ibid), teachers differ in fundamental emotional ways with regard to their ability to create space for coping with change. While contextual factors and external change variables are important within each of the individual stories some participants have clearly navigated the uncertainty of change better than others. It is beyond the scope of this study to suggest whether this is primarily as a result of disposition, prior experience or emotional intelligence. However, it is clear that certain self reported internal change variables or personal factors played a supporting role in enabling some participants to develop strategies to mitigate the impact. These personal factors or internal change variables included inter alia: age and experience (Nora), preoccupation with other work or personal events (Sarah), determination to establish a career path (Ryan), recent arrival from another part of the country (Barry) and passion for teaching (Rebecca). Other personal factors or internal change variables resulted in less positive outcomes. These included: naivety (Jenny), stressors outside work (Felicity) and feelings of guilt and domestic pressure (Claire). Internal change variables both mediated and contributed to individuals' reactions to the more widely experienced external change variables discussed above and resulted in reactions of differing levels of intensity to different aspects of the change process. Some teachers (e.g. Gordon) experienced both negative and positive internal change variables and it is clear that while some exerted a more powerful influence than others, it was the unique

combination and how it mediated other aspects of the change process which was critical in teachers' ability to create the space for coping.

6.3 What are the teachers' perceptions of the outcomes of this reform?

The underlying and stated purpose of a change to Academy status was to effect improvements in practice which would result in significantly higher standards for pupils and young people in the Academy (DfES, 2007). One of the objectives of this study has been to gain insight into teachers' experiences of the change process this required. The other has been to explore their perceptions of the outcomes of that process. This section of the discussion examines these perceptions and considers whether there are signs that teachers feel that the pain of change has been worthwhile and whether they believe that the upheaval of reorganisation and restructuring has indeed provided the opportunity to create a new learning environment in which to secure rapid school improvement.

Turner, Christensen and Meyer (2009) have argued that teacher beliefs, and therefore their perceptions, are rooted in their experiences. The findings in this study support this view as teachers' perceptions of the outcomes of the reform process have been influenced by their experience and emotional responses to the process itself. However, as I have argued in the previous pages, past experience alone does not provide a sufficiently cogent explanation for the various responses to the change process or, indeed, to teachers' perceptions of the outcomes of that process. Here I discuss how perceptions of the changes which took place were related to differing expectations and differing levels of acceptance. My findings suggest that teachers' experience of the context and culture of the predecessor schools has contributed to individual teachers' willingness and ability to come to terms with, and accept, the context in which they find themselves and particularly their perception of the outcomes of the reform process. The extent to which actual changes have met or exceeded teachers' expectations, or indeed failed to meet them, is also important in shaping their reactions to their new environment. However, it is an individual's emotional and cognitive make-up and how

this mediated the impact of external change variables and whether or not teachers developed coping strategies which adequately prepared them for the next stage of development which is still the strongest determining factor in whether they have positive, negative or mixed perceptions of the outcomes of change.

It is no surprise that the new organisation and new practices are characterised by what has become known as new managerialism. Indeed, it would be surprising if they weren't, firstly given the prevailing culture in education over the past decades and secondly, given the specific nature and purpose of this reform. Of particular interest is the differential impact that this has had on different teachers and different types of teachers who perceive it in varying ways depending on their previous experience and expectations. There are also some indications that the new managerialism has been tempered by greater partnership and collaboration than had been evident previously in the predecessor schools. Teachers' perceptions of the outcomes of the reform in relation to this are discussed under three headings: the new organisation, new colleagues and leaders, and new practices.

6.3.1 The new organisation

It is illuminating that it is only former primary teachers who comment on the impact of the new organisation, perhaps because the new organisation and its size represent such a stark contrast with their previous experience. There is a clear division amongst these participants with some embracing the opportunities for collaborative activity and professional development afforded by the new structure and others mourning the loss of the familiar comfort zone of a small school environment. Not surprisingly a **believer** and a **convert** are positive in their response and actively embrace the potential for cross fertilisation of ideas and practice and the **ambivalent** are uncomfortable with what they perceive to be a new corporatism accompanied by associated trappings such as increased bureaucracy and decreased autonomy (Day et al, 2007). The term '*mother ship*' used by Claire to describe the leadership hub of this new organisation conveys all too clearly her perception that it is at one remove from the primary activity of the Academy. For her and Felicity the new structures

represent what Storey (2007) calls 'an alien architecture of managerialism'. While Storey is referring to the wider prescription and regulation imposed at a national level this is clearly experienced in the same way by some of the teachers at a local level. The experience of moving from a small school environment where the impact of the nationally imposed regulatory framework had been mediated by the headteacher to a large organisation with several senior leaders and what appears to be a distant figure head has proved disorientating for the **ambivalent** and to a large extent resulted in what Simpkins (2000) describes as a cultural distancing between the senior staff and the wider body of teachers. This is evident in a number of stories although it is only the **ambivalent** teachers who voice their concern about feeling undervalued since the Academy opened despite also voicing praise for individual new leaders.

That some teachers are silent on this subject may well be the result of their prior experience working in a bigger predecessor school already dominated by the new managerialist culture and characterised by more bureaucratic procedures and hierarchical structures. These distinct differences serve as a reminder of the differential impact of the reform process on different participant groups (e.g. van Veen et al, 2005).

6.3.2 New colleagues and new leaders

For those participants fearful of moving to a new role or new classes any concerns about working in the new context appear to have been mostly unfounded. With one exception, and that is only reported by Gordon rather than a result of personal experience, all participants comment on the positive and supportive relationships with any new colleagues. Indeed, Gordon feels that without the support of these new colleagues he would have struggled much more with the challenges he faced in his new role. Other teachers speak warmly of new relationships established with colleagues across the Academy and celebrate the opportunities for cross fertilisation of ideas and sharing of practice. That this had not happened prior to the creation of the new organisation provides some insight into the disparate and divided nature of the education community in the area previously. The positive feedback about new staff relationships is marred only by the stories of the

ambivalent who are concerned about the influx of NQTs and therefore concerns about quality and relationships with the community and friction between some staff. The **believers, pragmatists** and the **converts** have quickly adapted to new expectations and new colleagues in much the same way as a teacher who takes up a new post.

Mixing teachers from different environments created one particularly interesting outcome, resulting in for at least one teacher (a **convert**), a changed perception of the process as a whole. While she speaks warmly of the welcome she received from her new colleagues Nora's perception of those same new colleagues provided her with a new insight into the decision to close the secondary school and create the Academy. Her perspective on their attitude to the new demands and the increased workload, particularly given her growing concerns about pupil progress, is revealing. Not only is she comfortable and familiar with the hard work that is required (whereas they are clearly struggling with the increased workload and higher expectations) but her attitude is that they will simply have to get used to it, that this is the new order of things. Faced with the reality of their new situation the previous 'bring it on' attitude towards the change is beginning to falter. The bringing together of teachers from different cultures and contexts and with different expectations was in itself a powerful means for teachers of creating new perceptions about each other, about themselves and about what could be achieved. It helped to redefine expectations and future possibilities. This is exemplified by Nora's changed perception of her colleagues but also her changed perception of herself which has resulted in promotion after a long career as a mainstream teacher.

While it is difficult to speculate on the reasons for the reactions of Nora's colleagues to the new expectations, a number of possible explanations present themselves. Firstly, these colleagues had been working in a '*school mix*' (Thrupp, 1999) which may have taken its toll over a substantial period of time (Lupton, 2004). It is also likely that it was this same '*school mix*' which had resulted in their initial enthusiasm for the change. However, adjustment under these circumstances may have proved challenging. Secondly, their reactions may have

resulted from what Reynolds (cited in Gray, 2000) describes as a reluctance to risk change instigated by a new regime which was poorly understood and which was making significantly increased demands. Lastly, given that the failings of the secondary school acted as the trigger for the reform these teachers may well have been working within a culture which was difficult to shift given the previous poor leadership. There are clear indications from all the secondary school participants that this may have been the case.

The reaction to new leaders was varied and dependent on who they were, previous experience of them and therefore expectations. Of particular note are the concerns raised by secondary teachers about some of the internal appointments at a senior level and whether or not there would be sufficient new blood to secure the required change. Indeed, some of these teachers describe a sense of despair at the appointment of certain individuals to key posts in the new structure. Despite these initial concerns and the issues raised above, these same teachers (the *believers* and the *pragmatists*) and others speak of a new climate of leadership and professionalism characterised by a commitment to see things through and high expectations tempered by realism. While the specific source of this new climate is not explicitly articulated, it is evident that it is the new principal appointed to lead the Academy and drive up standards of teaching and learning who is inspiring increased confidence and belief in the Academy's potential. Even Claire, who voices some misgivings about his style of leadership, recognises the value of this appointment. It would seem that one of the key premises of new managerialism, that new and effective leadership and management is the primary means of achieving desired outcomes within the performative culture (Morley & Rasul, 2000), is perceived by teachers to be accurate in this instance despite concerns about the challenges this also poses.

As in all organisations positive and negative aspects of new leadership are also raised. Individual leaders are singled out for praise or criticism. There is a suggestion that leaders new to the area may not have appreciated the extent of the '*problem*' (Thrupp, *ibid*) before they arrived and there is some confusion about specific roles

and responsibilities. Generally, however, teachers are more concerned with the practical issues resulting from new leadership demands and how these impact on their daily lives and workload. It is to this that I now turn.

6.3.3 New practices

While the quality of new leadership is deemed to be critical within the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms (e.g. Hopkins, 2001; Reynolds et al, 2000), the same paradigms assert that it is the nature of new practices and how they are developed, implemented and monitored that is key to securing a higher quality of teaching and learning and raising standards. Teacher perceptions of new practices are divided particularly amongst those whose students seemed to have the most to gain from change, namely the secondary teachers. Perhaps this is not surprising in the light of the discussion above. Two of the secondary participants (**believers**), both of whom are relatively new to the school and the profession, report positively on the impact of the new routines and higher expectations including the impact on student attitudes and behaviour. In contrast, two of the other secondary teachers (the **disillusioned** and a **pragmatist**) paint a radically different picture particularly with regard to student behaviour which they feel has not improved beyond a brief honeymoon period. In short, their high expectations have not been realised. While Paul remains pragmatic about this, Jenny is devastated and both report similar reactions from other colleagues.

In the context of Nora's observations on her new colleagues from the predecessor secondary school this raises questions as to the causes of such conflicting perspectives resulting from the same set of experiences. The **believers** and indeed the **converts** are perhaps more realistic about the timescales involved in securing change. They are certainly more conscious of the role they themselves have to play in that process. Ryan, for example, acknowledges that the learning walks are both a means of supporting teachers in their role but also a means of determining the quality of what is happening in classrooms. These teachers demonstrate awareness that while culture change can be instigated by new leaders everyone must play their part and real change takes time and effort. Recognising that the new direction and drive for increased accountability is pivotal to future success

they embrace the renewed evaluative and robust emphasis on teaching and learning, feeling both supported and challenged. Interestingly, both Paul and Jenny are completely silent on the issue of the learning walks focussing their attention instead on the failures of senior management to secure improvements in student behaviour, clearly an issue of higher priority for them.

The learning walks act as a metaphor for the new emphasis on teaching and learning and the new accountability and are discussed as frequently by all other participants. They seem to represent the new discourse of increased performativity in the Academy which while familiar and understood by most is reported as a threat by others. While the style in which they were undertaken was unfamiliar their purpose was well understood and has come to be appreciated. However, for most teachers it has taken time to become accustomed to this new practice and at first they were certainly regarded in much the same way as the introduction of other externally imposed regulatory mechanisms and are spoken about in the same terms. There is no doubt that the learning walks are an internal control mechanism designed to support the making of judgements and comparisons (Ball, 2001) and to make a teacher's performance visible (Webb, 2005). It could also be argued that they are explicitly designed '*to colonise teachers' lives and create new subjectivities*' (Ranson, 2003); in short, to set new standards of control.

Teachers' initial perception of them resembled the panopticon metaphor articulated by Perryman (2007). Teachers did not know when 'they' would come, 'they' would not speak, simply reached their judgement and left. The learning walks were rigorously implemented and at first they were definitely experienced as a surveillance tool. Whether teachers have become more familiar with either the senior leaders undertaking the learning walks or simply with the practice, the initial discomfort associated with this control mechanism is less keenly felt and their purpose more clearly understood by the time of the interview. An alternative explanation might be that the practice has been normalised and any dissent effectively silenced (Davis, 2003). Equally it could be argued that the learning walks and what they represent are entirely congruent with the same

professional goals which had initially triggered concerns about the Academy proposal amongst some teachers, that is, the emphasis on pupil progress. The general perception amongst most participants is that the emphasis on improving teaching and learning is not only requires but is resulting in increased teacher effort, improvements in planning, and more effective routines for pupils and closer scrutiny of practice. In this instance it would appear as if Ball's (ibid) '*flow of performativities*' is making a positive impact on the previous culture and practice and that teachers are both '*conforming*' and '*performing*' (Mahoney & Hextall, 2000) better as a result.

6.4 Summary of findings

This section of the discussion seeks to draw my findings together and suggest what other teachers in similar circumstances and change leaders can learn from the experience of the twelve teachers who took part in this research.

In preparation for writing this final chapter I have read a number of other theses to determine the most appropriate way to structure what I believe to be the most challenging part of this research. In so doing I came upon a device used by Margaret Noack (2011) which also drew together a number of complex findings. I propose to use her very simple device of listing and numbering the findings. Unlike her I have not used these to structure the whole chapter as this would have narrowed the focus of the preceding discussion. Furthermore, some of the lessons learned have been drawn from different parts of that discussion.

1. Despite the fact that all teachers are individuals it is possible to identify different patterns or types of responses to change

The categorisation of types developed from these teachers' stories suggests that there are different paths that can be taken by individuals through the process of change. The 'choice' of path is affected by a number of different change variables (both external and internal) and to a greater or lesser extent individuals 'choose' to

follow a particular path. Given the limited number of teachers in this research it is likely that more 'types' could be identified through wider sampling and/or sampling in a different context. The knowledge that there are patterns of response and that the experience of other teachers, including those who have voiced significant concerns, has shown that it is possible to develop coping strategies through a time of significant turbulence could provide a useful tool for self management for other teachers in similar situations. Simply knowing that it takes different 'types' varying amounts of time to accommodate change could enable individual teachers to locate themselves within a type and help to mediate the immediacy of emotional challenges which result from such circumstances. Similarly, awareness that different types of teachers experience change in different ways could prove valuable for change leaders in schools and in other organisations. Faceless or not, change leaders anticipate positive outcomes. While they cannot plan for the specific internal change variables of all those involved in a change event, nevertheless sensitivity to, and planning for, a variety of potential responses, particularly in highly contentious situations, could support effective management of a change that is perceived to be undesirable or difficult to achieve.

2. *'Assumed objectivity' helps teachers to create spaces for coping with change*

Despite major upheaval nine of the twelve teachers in this study developed strategies for coping with change. This involved the development of an 'assumed objectivity' or detachment from the emotions of others. That is not to suggest that these teachers did not experience similar emotions themselves, rather that they sought and implemented specific and personal strategies to create a distance between themselves and others, thus creating what Zembylas (2005) calls a '*space for coping with change*'. They managed this despite the nature of the change process, the inability of their leaders to create space for reflection and discussion and the emotional turmoil they perceived in others. Not only does this confirm the findings of Zembylas (ibid) and Hodgen and Askew (2005), it also exemplifies the range of different strategies that teachers in this study successfully used to do this. The teachers in this study found ways of developing this 'assumed objectivity' with little or no support from either their colleagues or their leaders. Strategic consideration from change leaders

whether at local or national level to establishing structures which proactively enable teachers to develop this objectivity and the skills of self analysis could support an individual's ability to manage their emotional responses through times of significant change and enhance the change process in so doing.

3. *Communication and the quality of information and the pace and timing of change are critical external change variables experienced by all teachers regardless of all other variables*

The quality of communication and information and the pace and timing of change impacted on all teachers in this study although they were experienced differently by individuals depending on individual circumstances. While communication about personal issues, particularly future job roles, was of primary importance, teachers also spoke of their frustration and concern regarding the quality of professional information. As they consider what needs to be communicated, when and how, it is important that change leaders remember that key information can be interpreted in different ways depending on its impact on individuals. They should also consider that information may need to be communicated more than once and in different ways if the anxieties of teachers or others undergoing significant change are to be minimised.

Regardless of whether teachers were positive about the proposed change or not, they all felt the pace of that change. Whether events unfolded as quickly as they felt is not as relevant as the perception that they did. This, again, should be considered as part of the change management process.

4. *Aspects of the change process had a differential impact depending on internal change variables*

Aspects of the change process made a differential impact on particular groups of teachers depending on a range of internal change variables, some relating to the context in which teachers worked, some to more individual variables such as the favourability of personal outcomes. Thus, for example, given the specific nature of this change the issue of job security and the need for information on this issue was of more concern to teachers in the primary phase than it was to teachers in the secondary phase. Furthermore, the potential for

advancement in a new organisation affected teachers' perspective of change. Awareness that this is the case and careful consideration of how different contextual factors might affect different groups could ensure that key information is communicated in appropriate ways for these groups, help to reduce anxiety and encourage engagement.

5. Internal change variables were more powerful than external change variables in influencing a teacher's ability to create an 'assumed objectivity' which helped them cope with the change

While this research does not provide sufficient evidence, and was not designed, to explore individual disposition or emotional intelligence, there is sufficient self reported evidence to indicate that various and quite specific internal change variables played a significant role in a teacher's ability to cope with change. Those who coped described a variety of factors which helped them to achieve what I have termed an 'assumed objectivity', that is, a conscious effort to create space between themselves and others. This provided the opportunity for personal reflection and the means to determine how they would confront the various external change variables they were faced with.

6. Bringing together teachers from different contexts can be a key factor in culture change and in recognising the need for change

While the evidence to support this finding is limited, Nora's comments, in particular, do seem to confirm one of the premises on which this reform was predicated, that culture change was required in this educational context. While the restructuring of schools to create one new organisation represented a major upheaval and a source of anxiety and concern, bringing together teachers from different contexts in new ways highlighted good practice and threw into relief weaker areas that needed to be addressed.

7. The appointment of the right leader and the introduction of new practices and increased accountability can make a positive impact

It would appear, in this instance, that there is evidence to support two of the basic premises of new managerialism and the school effectiveness paradigm, namely that the right leader and the introduction of new practices reflecting more robust accountability do indeed bring about the changes necessary to secure school improvement. That is, if one accepts the underlying assumption that we should continue to accept the performative culture in which we live and work.

8. *There is a need to manage the expectations of those involved in change*

The findings reinforce the need to actively manage expectations during times of change by setting clear parameters for what will be done and when and by keeping to promised timescales and behaviour. They also reinforce the importance of explaining what individuals can influence and how and what must remain beyond their control.

6.5 Contribution to academic knowledge

This section outlines how I believe my research contributes to the body of academic research in this field.

Dwelling as it does on the personal responses of teachers to change, this thesis contributes to knowledge in the field of teachers' emotional responses rather than to the performative context in which the reform took place.

6.5.1 Types of responses to change

In common with other research (e.g. Zembylas, 2005) my findings also reflect the emotional diversity of teacher responses to change. This is articulated specifically within a categorisation of types of responses to change. This categorisation lends itself towards a soft construct within this particular research context and provides a useful device to heuristically explore patterns of response to change. The 'types' identified (*believers*, *converts*, *pragmatists*, *ambivalent* and *disillusioned*) corroborate many of the findings of other researchers (e.g. Antonacopolou & Gabriel, 2001; Glaever, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005; Oplatka, 2005). They also indicate that there may be two key features which warrant further exploration. Firstly, patterns of response

can be stable or can change over time. Thus the *believers* and the *pragmatists* follow a fairly steady course through the turbulence of change. In contrast, the passage of time has a marked impact on the responses of the *converts* and the *disillusioned* with the former becoming more positive and the latter more negative. Secondly, the identification of the *pragmatists* as a 'type', a group who from the outset negotiate their way through the turbulence of change primarily by remaining focussed on the personal benefits of change is worthy of note, as self preservation and self interest seem to act as a road map for these teachers as they face the challenges of the change process.

6.5.2 Assumed objectivity and professional identity

Much is now being written about teachers' emotional responses to change (e.g. A. Hargreaves, 2005; Nias, 1996; Noddings, 2001; Zemblyas, 2005). It has also been proposed that teachers need '*spaces for coping*' with change (Zemblyas, 2005) or need to create '*zones of enactment*' (Spillane et al, 2002). This research suggests that not only can teachers create their own spaces for coping with change but that they also adopt a particular approach to this. Whether the assumed objectivity is something that they come to recognise in retrospect rather than at the time, the individual teachers' analysis of how they coped with the challenges of change indicates that in various ways they sought to distance themselves from what they perceived to be the more intense emotional responses of their colleagues. I believe that the Stroobant's (2005) approach to the interviews which encouraged participants to tell their story in their own way positively facilitated the identification of this finding.

My findings also provide a particular perspective on the ways in which individuals are able to reconstruct their professional identity during or resulting from a period of change as well as how this professional identity relates to self identity. If a teacher's sense of professional identity develops over time through their engagement with pupils and in relation to a particular educational context then the imposition of significant change requires that this sense of identity be reconstructed to accommodate new circumstances and new

demands. Teachers in this research vary in their ability to successfully reconstruct this sense of professional identity. This is dependent on a number of factors not least how teachers perceive the relevance of the change in relation to the pupils they teach and care about. Thus primary teachers struggle to identify how poor standards at the end of the secondary phase can be related to the work they are doing with pupils in the primary phase whereas secondary teachers are all too aware of the imperative for change in relation to both standards and behaviour. The professional identity of teachers in each of the phases is inextricably connected to the age and maturity of the pupil cohort. However, this alone does not offer an explanation for why some manage to accommodate the change and others are not so successful.

While some teachers struggle more than others, most teachers in this study manage to assume an objectivity which enables them to adjust their sense of professional identity regardless of educational context. Mona, for example, describes a strong sense of professional identity characterised by commitment to pupils and their learning. She articulates confusion as to the need for the Academy and demonstrates a strong association with the values and culture of the predecessor school. Despite this her story signals a reconstruction of her professional identity and she recognises and accepts the impact of the new context on her working life and the benefits for the pupils in her care. While her professional identity was threatened by the imposed change Mona's analysis of the situation results in a new, if not improved, conception of professional identity. In contrast Nora's story reveals a different perspective on professional identity in relation to her new secondary colleagues and how this was threatened by the change process. Initially eager to embrace the possibilities of change the professional identity of her secondary colleagues was put at risk by the new practices and higher standards demanded within the new regime. The nature of an individual's professional identity and their level of commitment to their pupils, therefore, impacts on their willingness and ability to accept change. The nature of both professional and self identity play a key role in an individual's ability to develop an assumed objectivity, manage their emotions and reconstruct their position within the new educational environment and its new demands.

6.5.3 External change variables, internal change variables and power

Other researchers have identified a range of external change variables that result in highly emotional responses (e.g. Amiot et al, 2006; Holt et al, 2007; Smollan and Sayers, 2009). This research supports these findings and highlights, in particular, the impact of the pace of change in this context. In common with other research, my findings also point to a number of internal change variables or personal factors which mediate the impact of change although it was beyond the scope of this research to explore these in depth. Analysis of the participants' stories reveals that although each teacher felt the impact of the external change variables these were perceived in different ways. Communication, for example, was perceived as open, honest and fair by some and the direct opposite by others. On the other hand all participants commented on the perceived pace of the change.

I would not be the first to suggest that both pace and communication represent aspects of power. Those in power (in this case the sponsor, the education department and the principal) determine what is communicated, when, how, and how quickly. They are in control and the teachers are, in this respect at least, powerless. Indeed, issues of power are both implicit and explicit throughout every aspect of this change experience. This ranges from the performative culture which permeates every facet of teachers' professional lives to the nature of the imposed change and the ways in which that change is managed. There is no doubt that the teachers in this study felt coerced by events beyond their control. To complicate matters further, in addition to the obvious power relations in play between the agents and the recipients of change, other internal power relations impacted on the ways in which the same events unfolded in different contexts. This was partly a result of the educational context itself but also a direct result of the insecurity of the leaders and managers in the predecessor schools and how they chose to represent the views of the external agents. While it may have been illuminating to include teachers who were middle managers within this study to do so would have created further complexity by introducing different types of power relations into the stories being told.

As with all other aspects of the change process individual teachers differed in their responses to the power relations at work through the change process. Some were particularly conscious of the internal politics at play. Others were more aware of the impact of the power exercised by external players. Yet others identified the power issues but remained relatively insulated from their impact. Responses to power within this change context were yet again dependent on the emotional responses to the change event and the teachers' ability to assume an objectivity that enabled them to accommodate the change process. Expressed differently, different teachers responded differently to the exercise of power within this change process according to a set of internal variables relating to personal experience and disposition.

6.6 Limitations and transferability

As with all research this study has its limitations. First and foremost has been my role as researcher. My unique position as education advisor to the sponsors during the project management phase of the setting up the Academy and subsequently to the newly appointed principal allowed me unusual access to a high profile reorganisation of primary and secondary education establishments into an Academy. At the same time this role had the potential to result in considerable researcher reactivity with participants potentially being more reluctant to share information or presenting it in ways which might appear more palatable to someone who had been involved. Indeed, on one or two occasions participants made direct reference to this issue. I mitigated the impact of this by requesting that participants tell their own story with as little prompting from me as possible and allowing them to set the tone and direction of the interview. I also ensured that interviews were conducted in spaces and at times which had been chosen by the participants to ensure that they felt in control of the interview process as far as possible. My aim at all times was to act as a 'professional stranger' (Agar, 1980 cited in Pole & Morrison, 2003) thus establishing a new relationship with each participant.

Another potential limitation associated with my previous role within the Academy process centred on any bias that I may have brought to the research. Knowledge and understanding of the change process allowed me insights into the stories told by participants which would not have been afforded to a more independent researcher (Syrjala et al, 2009). At the same time I risked bringing my own perspective to bear not only in the interview process itself but perhaps more importantly in my analysis of the data. I have sought to minimise this by adopting a highly reflexive approach at each stage of the process, returning to the various elements of data analysis and the transcripts themselves innumerable times to ensure that that the narrative I was creating genuinely reflected the stories I had been told.

A common criticism of this type of research, particularly by those who adopt a more rational or scientific approach, is its applicability to other settings, in other words the generalisability or transferability of the findings. This research has knowingly focussed on the stories of twelve individuals in a very specific context and has sampled their perspective of events at only one point in time. It has also been influenced by my personal perspective (Schofield in (ed.) Hammersley, 1993). To this extent some might argue that this places clear limitations on the transferability of my findings. . However, I would contend that that the stringent application of my research strategy and the highly reflexive approach that has been adopted, developed and refined through the research process and which is articulated in Chapter 3 has provided the academic rigour to enable the reader to transfer these findings to other contexts. My intention in using narrative inquiry has been to develop and produce a coherent and illuminating description of, and perspective on, a particular situation (Schofield, *ibid*) namely how teachers' experience a centrally imposed reform and their perceptions of that reform. While this may stand alone as a piece of academic research as I have stated elsewhere my audience has been threefold and includes academics, teachers and leaders of change. The value of the research therefore lies in its transferability to other schools, education establishments and even other organisations which are undergoing significant externally imposed change. It is for this reason that I have been meticulous

not only in developing and maintaining a rigorous approach to being a reflexive researcher but in articulating for the reader the ways in which this has been achieved.

6.7 Recommendations for future research

This study has done no more than dip a tentative toe in the murky waters of teachers' responses to, and perceptions of, educational change. In so doing it has confirmed the findings of Zembylas and Barker (2007) that these responses and perceptions are characterised by emotional diversity. Despite the limitations imposed by the sample size, the research has also identified a categorisation of types which suggests there may be patterns of response to change of this nature. Future research could usefully explore this further in a number of ways. The sample size could be increased to determine if other 'types' emerge. The categorisation of types itself could be tested by using it as a framework to analyse teacher responses to change. It would also be of benefit to conduct a comparison study into teacher responses and perceptions of change in similar contexts elsewhere to identify in what ways their experiences compare with those of the teachers in this study.

Reflecting on the research design itself I believe that it would be useful to conduct a future study in one location but sampling teachers' views at a number of different points in the process to determine how their perspective changes over time. A retrospective perspective of the most emotional period may have moderated some of the intensity of the experience. Interviews before the Academy opened, at what is arguably the most difficult period, then six months later and perhaps twelve months after that would enable comparisons between teacher responses at different points in the process. This could be supported by introducing an ethnographic aspect to the research design requesting teachers to keep a personal log, for example. This would provide further rich data with which to examine their changing perceptions over time and enable them to reflect on their sense making of the process. This would be of particular value with regard to identifying the ways in which they may or may not develop an 'assumed objectivity' and how internal change variables mediate the impact of external change variables.

It would also be of value to examine teacher perceptions of the outcomes of a similar reform process in another context. Although there are an increasing number of Academy chains, Academies were originally designed to provide a unique solution to what has been an intransigent problem. Understanding whether or not teacher perceptions of change in other contexts support or differ from the findings in this study would provide further evidence to justify or challenge this particular type of externally imposed reform.

6.8 Final thoughts

While it has not been articulated as a particular finding or lesson learned, I have been struck in re-reading this research by the relative passivity of the participants at each stage of the change process. In creating the categorisation of types I expected to identify a '*disaffected*' or even a '*militant*' type. Even a brief perusal of the national press or the Anti-Academies Alliance website (www.antiacademies.org.uk) might suggest that this would have been the case. Gordon was the only participant to express any negative views on the concept of Academies or sponsors. This was a surprise. This reform represented a major upheaval. Some teachers faced a change after a long career in predecessor schools in which they felt comfortable and with which they were familiar. And yet nine of the twelve participants embraced or successfully accommodated that change. Of the remaining three, two recognised that things would eventually improve. It is only one young female teacher fresh out of her NQT year who was completely disillusioned. It may be a reflection of the individuals involved in the research, or of the culture prevalent in the area or in the predecessor schools, or the apparent success of the reform but not one of these teachers reported any direct challenge to any aspect of the change process despite some well articulated concerns. Perhaps the participants were suffering from resigned acceptance (Mahoney et al, 2004a) or any dissent had effectively been silenced (Davis, 2003). However, I was left with the overriding impression that the reform process had acted much like a juggernaut. It had a predetermined course and it had set off. It was coming and coming fast. Best to simply to deal with it as best you can.

Appendix A

Information sheet for interviewees

Title of research: A narrative enquiry into the impact of becoming an Academy on teachers.

This research will form the context for my thesis for a Doctorate in Education.

Aims of the research

The research in which you have been asked to participate seeks to identify the ways in which the process of changing into an Academy has impacted on teachers who were involved.

My research seeks to explore the following issues:

1. How did classroom teachers experience the change involved in becoming an Academy?
2. What do their stories reveal about the nature, extent and significance of this change on their lives and working practices?
3. How did they feel about the process of change and how do they feel now?
4. What do their stories reveal about any coping strategies they developed?

What is involved?

If you consent to being involved in this research you would simply be asked to tell your story. It would involve a taped interview of between 45 minutes and one hour, no longer. We would meet at a time which is most convenient during your working day and in a place where you feel comfortable. I will try to ask as few questions as possible as I am interested in what you feel it is important for me to know.

Following the interview the audio recording will be transcribed and you will be asked to check that it is an accurate record of what you said. Once the research has been completed the audio recording will be destroyed. It will not be used for any other purpose.

As my findings emerge I will ask you to consider them from your perspective and give me any further information that you wish to confirm or disconfirm my interpretation.

Once the research is complete I will provide you with a verbal and written summary of the findings. I will also make a copy of the thesis which will result available to you on request.

The data gathered from your interview will be completely anonymous at all times. While the tapes will be transcribed by a third party this person will not know who you are nor will they know the context of the research. Your data will not at any time be made available to anyone else.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from it at any time.

If you wish to find out any further information about me and the context of my research you may contact my supervisors at Durham University: Anji Rae or Carl Bagley.

If you wish to make a complaint on ethical grounds this should be referred to the Secretary of the Ethics Advisory Committee: Sheena Smith on Sheena.Smith@Durham.ac.uk

Appendix B

Consent Form

TITLE OF PROJECT:

The impact of becoming an Academy on teachers

(The participant should complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself)

*Please cross out
as necessary*

Have you read the Participant Information Sheet? YES / NO

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study? YES / NO

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? YES / NO

Have you received enough information about the study? YES / NO

Who have you spoken to? Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Prof.

Do you consent to participate in the study? YES/NO

Are you aware that your interview will be recorded?
(This recording will only be used for the purposes of this research) YES/NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study:

- * at any time and
- * without having to give a reason for withdrawing and
- * without affecting your position in the University? YES / NO

Signed **Date**

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

Appendix C

Thematic index

1. Contextual factors/influences/outcomes
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 - 1.2 Influence of individual contexts/school identity/culture
 - 1.3 Influence of predecessor school heads
 - 1.4 Perception of other schools
 - 1.5 Academies in the media
 - 1.6 Personal experience of /response to academies
 - 1.7 Acceptance of the need for change/or not
 - 1.8 Other
2. Period of destabilisation
 - 2.1 Uncertainty
 - 2.2 Pace
 - 2.3 Climate
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 - 3.1 Self interest
 - 3.2 Concerns
 - 3.3 Strong negative emotions including stress
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 - 4.3 Pupil reactions
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7. Expectations and threats

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8.2 My role as a researcher

8.3 Other

9. Other key issues

Appendix D

Transcript of interview with Ryan

Ryan

I'll sort of get it into a good place. I joined (name of secondary school) in my second year of eh 1.1
teaching. Knew what I was in for when I joined. It was known as a challenging, relatively deprived 1.2
area. Knew what was expected and I was intending to earn my stripes as it were, work in a fully
comprehensive school that sort of thing. On my interview I actually had read something about the
prospect of an Academy so I was aware that it was something that may have been happening. The
headteacher at the time said that this was something that may or may not be happening and as it 2.1
turned out it happened much more quickly, I think, than a lot of the staff had realised. 2.2

Interviewer

Really

Ryan

From the consultation process, it seemed like it almost took sort of 12 months from consultation t
opening. I realise it was actually much longer than that but I think my perception and th 2.2
perception of other staff was that it was something that may or may not be happening and then a 2.1
of a sudden it was something that will be happening very, very quickly. I think from my ow 2.2
perspective and a lot of other peoples', that having worked in the school you recognised that thing 1.2
weren't what they .. that progress wasn't being made. Something needed to be done. There was, 1.7
think, a split. Some staff were sort of resentful of the change, or the likely change, but there wa 4.1
quite a few staff who were looking forward to it. Thought this was an opportunity to do somethin 4.6
intensely radical here. It could be different and something to look forward to. In my position as
general teacher we were very ... well reassured. You're just going to move from this organisation t 3.4
this organisation. I think for those members of staff who were in more senior positions, that' 4.2
different. You know, with the schools joining to form one large school they recognised it wouldn'

necessarily transfer across. You didn't have a lot of duplication. But for me personally I really saw this as an opportunity. It was something I was keen to be part of. 3.4

Interviewer

In what ways?

Ryan

Well firstly for me definitely the school, the buildings were built in the 1960s and as you see it falling down round our feet and I recognised that the new Academy, new buildings. It's been my experience that when children are in an environment especially one like this where literally it's falling down round us. I've got a classroom, room 24, which is in the process of being refurbished but there's two buckets in the corner to catch the drips. It's, you know, it's not ideal and you are trying to plead with the children to have respect for the equipment and something will fall off the wall. It's a hard situation. In that department a more comfortable, spacious... Somewhere they want to be. At the moment in the winter here no-one wants to be here. It's cold and wet. It's not a pleasant environment. So from that physical environment that was something that ... but also just from the way... I wasn't sure what the Academy was going to be. There was a fair amount of negative press especially amongst the unions, people like that, although a lot of it does seem to be founded on hearsay. There isn't ... It doesn't appear to be a huge body of research on Academies. just doesn't exist. I'm not sure whether that's I'm sure ...I would get it to come out. 7.1 1.2 2.1 1.5 2.1

Interviewer

Mmm

Ryan

We weren't sure. I wasn't sure what the change was going to be. You know that it's a new Academy. You recognise that there was going to be dramatic changes. At the early stage we knew it was going to be (name of Academy). It'll have the sponsor's ethos but beyond that we didn't know what the actual Academy was going to be, how it was going to be implemented, the structures. 2.1 7.2 2.1

mean as they are becoming more transparent now it's more explicit. It's easier to understand but at that time we knew it was going to be a change. I knew it was going to be a dramatic change but we weren't sure what it was going to be. There was that uncertainty. So again some people were keen to embrace that said well 'this could be a good journey forward' and others not.

2.1
4.6
4.5

Interviewer

You mentioned **now** several times.

Ryan

Well I think it's obviously in transition and initially students were .. I was really surprised at how much the students wanted to hold onto their old school because ..there was ...I'm not sure what the, you know, what the reasons for that were or why they had this sort of attachment to it. Especially since some of them hadn't been there longer than the sixth form... the fear of the unknown really for them more so than the staff but I was really surprised about. Now many of them actually come in. A lot of the students were beginning to say well, actually, maybe it's not so bad. Some of the changes obviously in uniform, that sort of, well from my perspective, sort of gave them an introduction to middle class values. Such as uniform. Traditionally what people'll say: 'Give them back the uniform – dreams and aspirations.' Things such as these. Initially some resentment from the students but now that they've actually got ..especially the sixth form we are starting to see an improvement in work ethic. Because I've got quite a lot of the sixth form timetable and the word I use to describe the sixth form is apathetic. You know they really are. We had a group of sixth form boys last year and the summer they came in Bermuda shorts and flip flops and I raised this with the head of sixth form. I thought we've got this policy of wearing uniform. These boys were relaxed individuals so you can imagine I'm there trying to do some English, whatever, Bermuda shorts. It's not the environment that we want. But I think that a lot of them, they recognise that they come to school dressed as young professionals and they get into it. I don't think it's going to happen overnight. It's going to be a long process because they need to see what's going to happen.

4.3

2.1

4.3
6.1

4.3

6.1
1.2

6.1

4.3

I had an interesting conversation with one of my tutees. She'd had an interview with the sixth form mentor and she'd said she was trying to buy in something for September when I leave the school and encourage her to apply to university ... just not keen a bit sort of resentful of this and she said you know there was a genuine drive in the Academy to make sure that you've got somewhere for this and her response was 'I was at (name of secondary school) 4 years and no one was bothered' 1.2 What happened to this? Why are they suddenly bothered now?' It was trying, you know disappointed to hear that but that was her perception right or wrong. That was her belief.

Interviewer

And what about you?

Ryan

Well personally I've been promoted since. A new role. Aside from the new role in terms of classroom teaching. Its new structures in place. There seems to be an increased focus on what actually happens in the classroom. I think beforehand in terms of ... there was a lot of intervention - data tracking. Let's colour code children red, orange, amber. Whereas we've got that now but from (name of senior leader), definitely, there seems to be 'well look I want a long term focus. We want to genuinely improve teaching and learning' and that wasn't ever there before. There was an expectation that you will somehow manage to persuade these children to get a grade but the way in which that was done was not so important and that seems to have been a change. So it's more of an explicit focus on what actually happens in the classroom. The implementation of the learning walks are bringing about a shift. They are there to support staff but at the same time they're obviously there to give an idea of what's happening in classrooms. I think that's a positive thing really not something again.. Some staff, if they're teaching, feel that if someone's on a learning walk they're being judged rather than, well it may be that, an opportunity to say this is what the requirements are, what can we do, what's actually happening, what are the problems? 3.4 6.1 1.2 6.2 6.3 1.2 6.1 6.1

Interviewer

You seemed to have experienced it very positively.

Ryan

I've only been here for 2 years so I didn't have any of the attachment that the children had so for me at least. ...I was keen to embrace it anyway. In terms of positive all the way through? Obviously there were problems. I mentioned before the virtual learning environment. Things haven't been implemented as quickly as you'd imagine. But saying (name of Principal) at the first ... that there will be problems. Things will not go smoothly. It's a fast track Academy so be prepared for these and they've not been as significant possibly. My most frustrating aspect is the fact that I am a mobile teacher. As a department we don't have classrooms so that can be ..We've got discrepancies from teaching and learning perspective. We want to make a prompt start to the lesson ...

Interviewer

Mmm

Ryan

You are walking across the school to a classroom with a bucket in the corner. So that, that's an issue but again the number of students in the school has, you know, increased hugely and physically the building is a bit ... and we got to recognise that, recognise that people are doing what they can. It's not something that's ...

Interviewer

OK

Ryan

I think there was good communication. With any change it's never always going to be ... with staff They don't want the change. They see it as an opportunity to possibly reduce the number of ... bring in changes and there's a lot of erm negative stories in the media about Academies in terms of ...you can forget about holidays. You're going to be here from 7 to 7. You know, all of these variou

things. Sometimes, some people may read into things. I suppose, I'm pretty sceptical about most 1.1
things I read, especially when there is such a limited body of evidence of or research on academic 1.6
and the fact that every Academy is different. Meetings initially in school were open and honest 1.6
discussions. We did ask lots of questions. Questions were answered as best they could. The TUP 5.2
thing was made very, very clear. I think it was clear but again that was for me at a low level, as
basic teacher. Someone higher up, again, I wouldn't, couldn't say. 4.2

Interviewer

So in terms of your story, it's coming across as a very positive.

Ryan

Yeah. I think with a change of this nature I have two choices. I could decide to, you know, be 1.7
difficult, not go along either with doing that but at the end of the day my feelings were that the
current system was not working. The students were not going last year with good headline A down 1.2
to C figures. That was 21%. That's knowing the sort of children we have – you see that's not right
So I said 'Look, it's not working. I could either be difficult or I could embrace the change, so having 1.7
done that it has been positive. Had I not chosen, had I decided that I was clinging on to the old 3.4
school, I would have been so positive. I would imagine that, you know, every discussion of this new 3.5
policy oh here we go ...

Interviewer

Mmmm.

Ryan

Absolutely, yeah. I don't think my individual characteristics varied that greatly from anyone else. It's 1.1
just within the department we are in fact, sort of, introverted department. We're off in our little 1.2
block and essentially we had those people who weren't keen to be involved. We had our head of 4.6
department left. I think you can see how their interpretation of the change differed from mine 4.5

There was sort of a reluctance to embrace it but it wasn't based as far I could see on anything concrete. It seemed to be 'OK this is obviously how it's going to work' and any change was received negatively. Once that had started there was nono way it wasn't going to change. 4.1

Interviewer

Did any of that that impact on you?

Ryan

It made me more determined. Just I'm not going to take that approach but again, that as you said 1.1
could my individual reaction to that.

I recognise that everyone is an individual and has individual needs and individual beliefs. I'm here to teach and my purpose is to ensure that the students that I teach get the best possible grades. That was my starting point. I didn't feel ...that's not to say that some people have but perhaps some people were comfortable with the way things were. I suspect that they would be less comfortable. 7.4

Interviewer

Are there things that you haven't said that you still want to reflect on?

Ryan

I think in terms of the transition possibly there may have been more communication but I know that 5.2
a lot of that communication was determined by the current school so it would have been great to 1.3
have representatives of the Academy in school earlier in the day but I realise that the outgoing school controls events so again it's not something that they're necessarily going to want to do or going to facilitate.

Interviewer

Mmmm.

Ryan

Well. I think if the staff were aware that the outgoing school controlled that, it wasn't so much of 1.3

problem. As you recognise ..but the main thing were the cohort of staff who didn't realise it was so
 You know why are they not coming in? Why are they not showing an interest? Surely if they'r 4.5
 going to start in September this needs to be done badly sometime and maybe because if they'r
 more visible but it was my expectation that someone somewhere was doing things that needed t 1.1
 be done. Otherwise it would be mayhem in September which it wasn't. When we came in and w 4.6
 saw the students on the first day everyone was like 'what's going to happen?' You know 'are the 4.3
 going to be OK with it? Some of them as I'm sure you are aware, the students previously in the sixt
 form they went on strike. This was maybe 5, 6 years ago when the previous headteacher was in th 1.2
 school and students with some parents blockaded the school. They were quite militant. It was jus
 the most active thing I have ever heard of them doing. So we weren't certain if we were going to se
 some sort of horrendous incident or we were going to see a school in transition. 4.3

Interviewer

There was an expectation that there might be something?

Ryan

There was an expectation that we didn't know what was going to happen. And anything wa 4.6
 possible and as it happens I think some people were disappointed that it was non eventful. The 4.3
 accepted the changes for the most part. There were a few students who turned up without th 7.3
 uniform and were dealt with, I think. Even before, during the summer some of the children's
 reported comments was ... had said 'Look I'm going to behave badly now because come Septembe
 I'm not going to be able to'. So there was a perception amongst the students that when th
 Academy opened that from day one they were going to have to change. I'm not sure where tha
 came through to or came from but there was a definite perception amongst the students toward
 the end of the year that there was going to be a change and the change was going to result in, for
 their point of view, a structured environment. For me, you know, you explain to these student 6.1
 'well wait, how does that justify your misbehaviour now? You know you're going to behave i

September.’ There was an expectation ‘I’m going to have to behave more’ among the students.

wasn’t my experience. There seemed to be a general perception amongst the students. 4.3

Interviewer

Is there anything else that you think we should..?

Ryan

Well, for me it has been a positive experience. New build starts April 26th. I expect, well we’ve been 3.4
told the secondary .Knowing that’s on the way ... you can see at some point things will improve 7.1

Whatever difficulties practical difficulties they’re temporary. It’s unfortunate for the current year 6.4
groups 10, 11, 12, they’re not going to see it but I’ve got. It’s a but ...

Interviewer

Are you going to stay?

Ryan

Absolutely, yeah. Definitely.

Well, it’s um. This is my third year so I’ve not been here for a vast amount of time so it will be nice 1.1
just to see that whole change. I’m interested too to see how the children react to the new building 7.1

How they feel there, the ...I’m just interested to see how what the change is going to be, how the 7.3
environment changes, how the teaching changes, how grades of students if any. Do aspirations
change? Sixth form in the past have said ‘well I’m not sure about university. I don’t want to do this

Students with very high grades. One student who’s got an offer for Oxford but even then it’s ‘well 7.3
might just go to York or I might just go to Durham’. Will the Academy change that? Will they be
more keen to ...? There’s been a physical change in staff. From the start to now. That has changed. 6.4

think there still is a division amongst staff. There were some of those staff who said ‘Right. This 4.6

how we’re going to change. We’re going to make of it what we can but there are still a lot of staff
maybe with much more experience than I have who have seen this before. This happened in 1975

I’ve seen this change, these things, but those staff will react in that way to almost any change 4.5

Although saying that we've got a very senior member of our department who's been here for 1 4.6
years. One of the longest serving staff. He was, um, probably the most enthusiastic advocate. Lik
me he said 'it's not working'. He was quite pragmatic. 'It's not working. Things need to change. I'r 1.7
all for it'.

Interviewer

It's nothing to do with age.

Ryan

Absolutely not. He was an example, you know, an unexpected. He came across I'll not say cynic: 4.6
but edging towards that. Very critical of new teaching ... very ... business to be done. He recognise 1.7
that. I'm not sure if he's still of that opinion but ...

Interviewer

Is there anything else that you feel you want to add?

Ryan

I don't think so. I think I've exhausted myself.